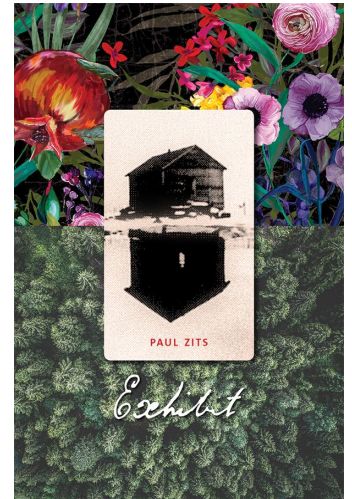


# Alberta Reads

## Exhibit

by *Paul Zits*

published by [University of Calgary Press](http://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780805097000)



### Book Club Questions:

1. *Exhibit* is a book of poetry that tells the story of Margaret McPhail's 1929 trial using both original language and excerpts from published sources, like archival documents. Does this collage format influence how you read the poems?
2. True crime and trial stories are not normally told in poetry. How does the medium of poetry impact how you think of the characters and events of the book? How would it be different if the same facts were presented in a non-fiction book or documentary film?
3. *Exhibit* contains excerpts from real evidence presented in Margaret's trial juxtaposed with or reinterpreted as poetry. What does this reveal about the relationships between language, justice, morality, and truth?
4. Margaret McPhail's murder trial is not a well-known part of Alberta history. How does this affect the book? Would the same approach work for a very well-known historical trial? Would it work for a contemporary trial?
5. Paul Zits wrote *Exhibit* without knowing the outcome of Margaret's trial and never shares the verdict in the book. How does this affect how you understand the characters and events of the book? Would knowing the official verdict change your views?
6. Some poems are written from Margaret's perspective, some from Alex's perspective, and others from various third-person perspectives. What does this reveal about the characters and events of the book?



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7. The language in the book is sometimes stark, sometimes complex, and sometimes shocking. How does the author's choice of language shape how you understand the facts of the story and the motivations of the characters?
8. Margaret is accused of the murder of her brother. How do these poems approach gender, violence, and justice? How would they change if Alex was accused of murdering Margaret?
9. The way we understand isolation, murder, mental illness, justice, and punishment has changed greatly since 1929. Are historical views reflected in the book? Is there any tension between modern and historical views?
10. *Exhibit* is a challenging book. Were there any aspects you found frustrating? What did you enjoy most?