



Media Release

September 17, 2026

Re: 2026 Alberta Book Publishing Awards Winners

Edmonton – The Book Publishers Association of Alberta (BPAA) is pleased to announce the winners of the [2026 Alberta Book Publishing Awards](#). These awards celebrate the essential role Alberta book publishers play in championing local voices and telling Alberta's Story. The awards gala was hosted at the Matrix Hotel in Edmonton, and delegates from across Canada gathered to celebrate the achievements of Alberta's book publishing industry. This year, a total of 16 awards were presented, including two Lifetime Achievement in Alberta Publishing Awards and the Mel Hurtig Publisher of the Year Award.

The Lifetime Achievement in Alberta Publishing Award was presented to two recipients: Kathy Killoh of Athabasca University Press and Jean Poulin, founder of Les Éditions Duval. Kathy was honoured for her steadfast leadership and enduring contributions to open access publishing, and Jean was recognized for his decades-long career, including his role in founding the groundbreaking Alberta publishing house Les Éditions Duval. Together, these awards celebrate two individuals whose lasting legacies have positively shaped Alberta's book publishing industry.

Freehand Books was the recipient of the Mel Hurtig Publisher of the Year Award. They were recognized for publishing fresh, creative, and award-winning titles and exemplifying excellence and innovation in their work.

Congratulations to all of the winning and shortlisted publishers, authors, and designers. Thank you to our funders, in particular, the Government of Alberta and the Department of Canadian Heritage, through the Canada Book Fund, and to our award sponsors, whose contributions helped to make this event possible. We look forward to next year's awards and the continued growth of the Alberta book publishing industry.

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For more information contact:

Megan Bishop, Executive Director
mbishop@bookpublishers.ab.ca

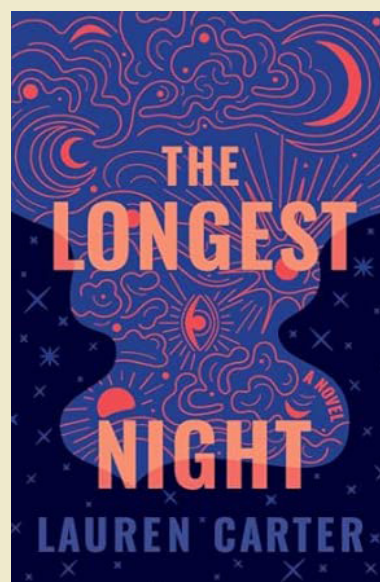


WINNERS OF THE 2026 Alberta Book Publishing AWARDS

Douglas Barbour Award for Speculative Fiction



The Longest Night
BY Lauren Carter



Scholarly & Academic Book of the Year

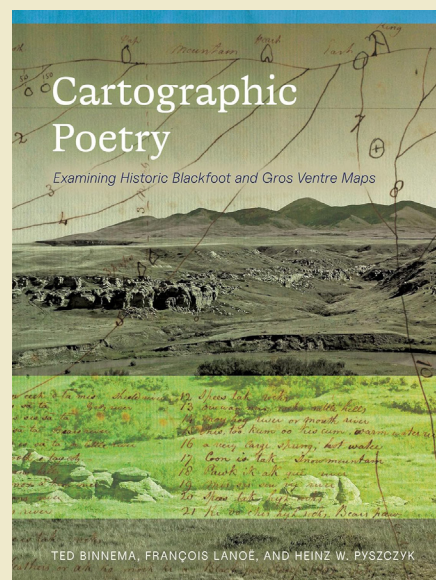
Award sponsored by Alberta Counsel



UNIVERSITY of ALBERTA PRESS

Cartographic Poetry: Examining Historic Blackfoot and Gros Ventre Maps

BY Ted Binnema, François Lanoë, and Heinz W. Pyszczyk



Mystery & Thriller Book of the Year

RENEGADE

ARTS ENTERTAINMENT

Blood and Fire

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY Bill Slavin



Regional Book of the Year

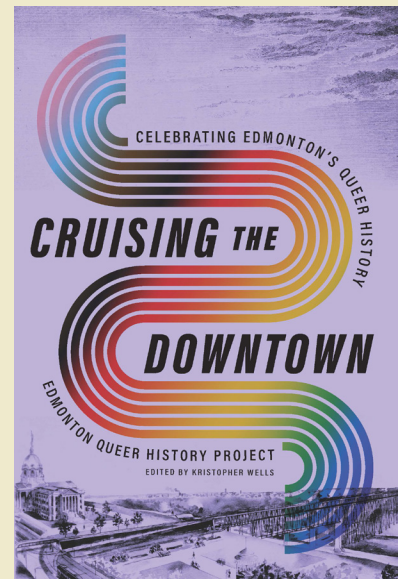
Award sponsored by Alberta Views



NEWEST PRESS

Cruising the Downtown: Celebrating Edmonton's Queer History

BY The Edmonton Queer History Project EDITED BY Kristopher Wells



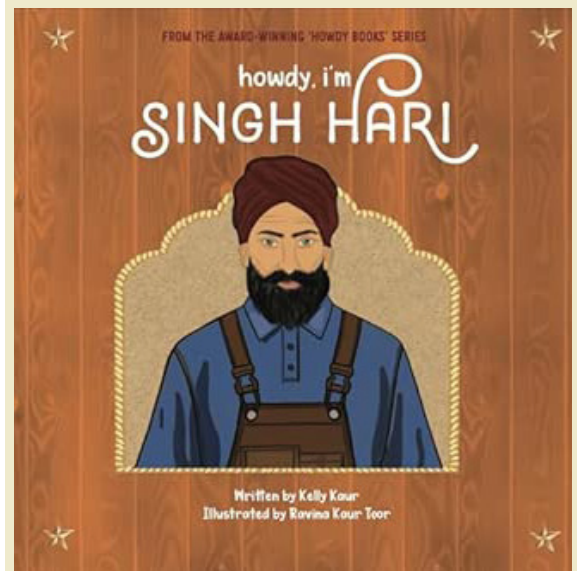
Children's & Young Adult Book of the Year

Award sponsored by Marquis Books



Howdy, I'm Singh Hari

BY Kelly Kaur ILLUSTRATED BY Ravina Kaur Toor



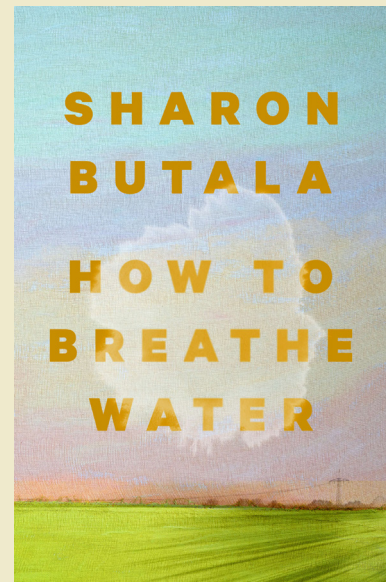
Trade Non-Fiction Book of the Year

Award sponsored by Burke Group



How to Breathe Water

BY Sharon Butala

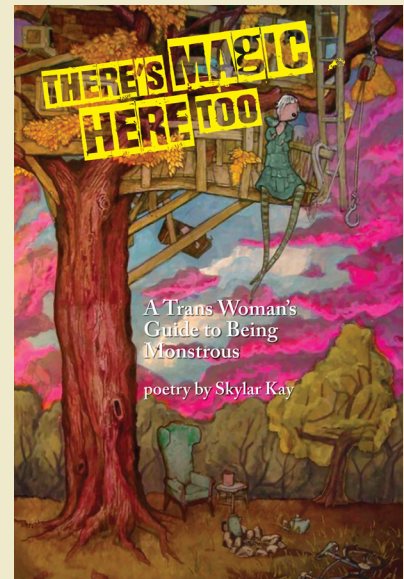


Robert Kroetsch Award for Poetry



There's Magic Here Too: A Trans Woman's Guide to Being Monstrous

BY Skylar Kay

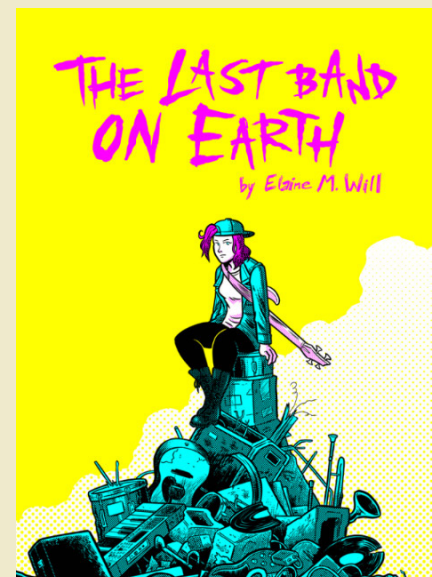


Graphic Novel of the Year



The Last Band on Earth

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY Elaine M. Will

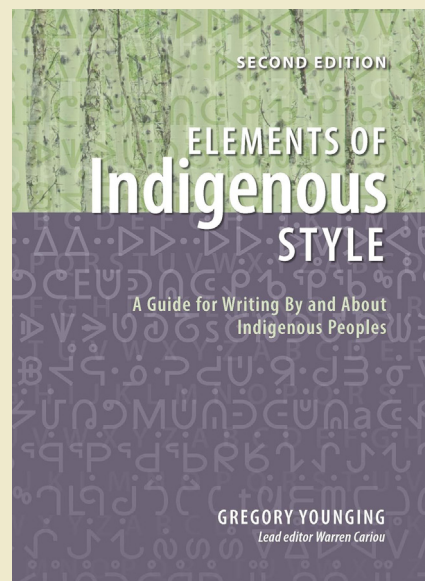


Learning Book of the Year



Elements of Indigenous Style, 2nd Ed.

BY Gregory Younging EDITED BY Warren Cariou, Deanna Reder,
Lorena Sekwan Fontaine, and Jordan Abel



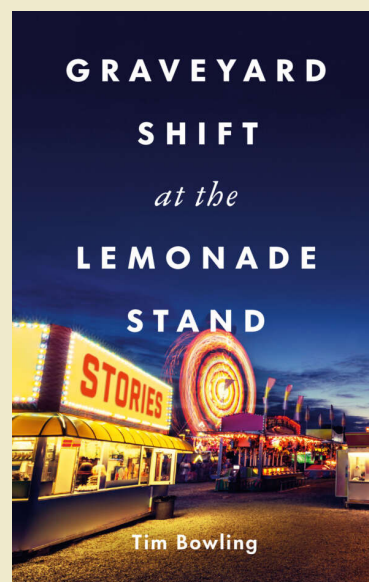
Trade Fiction Book of the Year

Sponsored by Quill & Quire



Graveyard Shift at the Lemonade Stand

BY Tim Bowling



Book Cover Design of the Year

Sponsored by Friesens



Canada Unscripted: Conversations with Canadian Media Icons

EDITED BY Vic Sarin BOOK COVER DESIGNED BY Austin Andrews

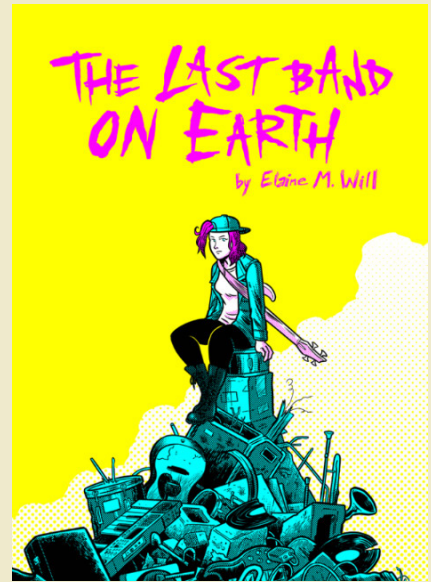


Book Illustration of the Year

RENEGADE
ARTS ENTERTAINMENT

The Last Band on Earth

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY Elaine M. Will



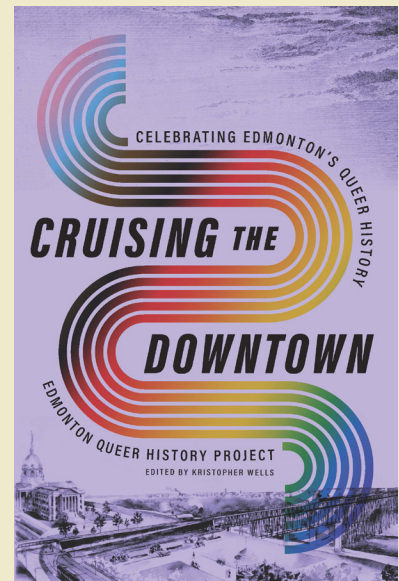
Book Design of the Year



NEWEST PRESS

Cruising the Downtown: Celebrating Edmonton's Queer History

BY The Edmonton Queer History Project EDITED BY Kristopher Wells
DESIGNED BY Natalie Olsen



Mel Hurtig Publisher of the Year

Freehand Books



Lifetime Achievement in Alberta Publishing Award

Kathy Killoh

There are highly visible leaders, and there are those whose influence is quieter, consistent, and woven throughout systems and processes. Kathy Killoh's career exemplifies the kind of impact that is deeply felt but rarely celebrated. Instrumental in establishing AU Press as Canada's first open access scholarly press in 2007, Kathy's steady and consistent presence has helped shape Canadian open access publishing, strengthened the scholarly community, and brought the work of countless academics to a global audience.

Kathy's commitment to scholarly publishing and to AU Press has been steadfast, and she has stepped up regularly to provide leadership during times of change. Serving as Acting Director at AU Press on three separate occasions, she provided continuity, stability, and direction when it mattered most. Service has been a throughline throughout Kathy's career. She has been consistently engaged with the Book Publishers Association of Alberta, Association of Canadian Publishers, the Association of Canadian University Presses, and the Association of University Presses.

Kathy prefers to operate behind the scenes, where her efforts are embedded in the publications themselves and in the structures and processes that make them open and accessible. True to her nature, she does not seek the spotlight, but Kathy's accomplishments deserve to be celebrated.

Lifetime Achievement in Alberta Publishing Award

Jean Poulin

Few individuals have had a greater impact on Alberta book-publishing than activist, graphic designer, francophone leader, pioneering publisher, and Duval House founder Jean Poulin.

From the early 1980s, Jean's relentless creativity and energy made him a favourite design and production partner to many clients, including Alberta's growing community of book publishers. When his clients began to bring design and layout in-house, he decided to launch his own publishing house in Edmonton. Duval House's first title was a French-language translation of a trade union resource in the mid-1990s, and over the next decade and a half, more than 600 followed. Throughout his career, Jean exercised his amazing talent for bringing people and organizations together and motivating them to accomplish seeming impossibilities. His accomplishments include building the largest catalogue of French-language textbooks outside Quebec, developing English educational resources used by students in China, and creating Canada's largest collection of Indigenous language and culture resources for schools.

After selling Les Éditions Duval in 2006, Jean returned eventually to his roots to form a small translation, design, and production firm called Sine Qua Non. He is now retired, living in Edmonton near family and a lifetime of friends.

Funders



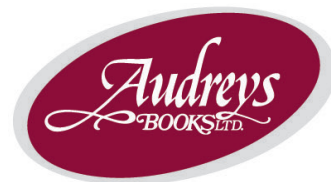
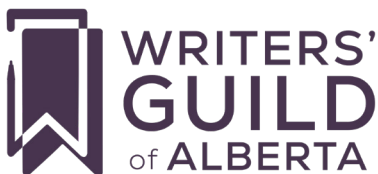
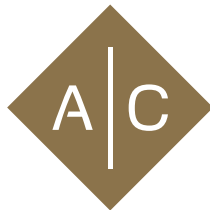
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Conseil des Arts
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