

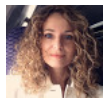
South Branch Scribbler

SOMETHING DIFFERENT EVERY WEEK - STORIES - GUEST AUTHORS - 4Q INTERVIEWS - ITEMS OF SIGNIFIGANCE. Allan Hudson

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4Q Interview - Meet Cara Brookins, Interesting Lady, Terrific Author.

Cara Brookins lives in Arkansas and is a senior programmer/systems analyst for City of Little Rock. She is a very fine writer. Where s...



Guest Author JP McLean of British Columbia

If there's one thing I've learned about the world of writers, it's how kind and generous a lot they are. Allan Hudson is a perfect examp...



4Q Interview with Gabriel Malenfant of Radio Radio

Gabriel Louis Bernard Malenfant is one third of the popular Hip Hop/ Electro group Radio Radio . The band has been garnishing awards ...



Guest Author Lockie Young of New Brunswick, Canada.

Lockie Young is the only author I know personally whose work has been stolen. Yes, someone stole one of his short stories and posted it on...



4Q Interview with Yves Chiasson, Songwriter Extraordinaire

Yves Chiasson - musician extraordinaire, songwriter, kick ass guitar player has freshly returned to Montreal after a Zero Degrees Cel...



Guest Author Beth Powning of Markhamville, NB

Good news! One of my favored authors is the guest this week on the

Saturday, 7 January 2017

Guest Author Beth Powning of Markhamville, NB

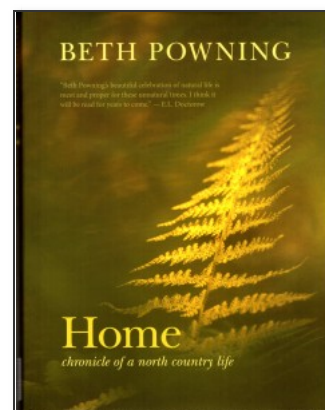
Good news!



One of my favored authors is the guest this week on the Scribbler. So excited to have **Beth Powning** answer questions for the 4Q Interview.

Beth was born in 1949. She graduated from Sarah Lawrence College, New York, where she majored in creative writing, studying with novelist E.L.Doctorow. She immigrated to Canada in 1972 with her artist husband, Peter Powning. Since then, she and Peter have lived on a farm in Markhamville, New Brunswick, where they grow much of their own food in organic gardens. They have one son, Jake Powning, who lives nearby with his wife, Sara, and two granddaughters. Beth Powning photographed two gardening books before publishing her own first book in 1995, *Seeds of*

Another Summer (Penguin) published in the US as *Home – Chronicle of a North Country Life* (writing and photography), recently re-released by Goose Lane Editions. She went on to write *Shadow Child* (Penguin Canada - subsequently re-issued by Knopf Canada, short-listed for the Edna Staebler Award for Literary Non-fiction); *The Hatbox Letters* (Knopf Canada, a best-seller and long-listed for the Dublin IMPAC Award); *Edge Seasons* (Knopf, a Globe and Mail Best Book) and *The Sea Captain's Wife* (best-selling novel, long-listed for the Dublin IMPAC Literary Award and short-listed for the Thomas Head Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award). This novel was published in French in 2014 by Editions Perce Neige. Her latest novel, *A Measure of Light*, Knopf Canada, March 2015, was a



Globe and Mail Best Book, was long-listed for the Dublin International Literary Award and won the N.B. Award for Fiction. Her work has been widely published in magazines and anthologies, and she has made many appearances across Canada and in the U.S., Ireland and Great Britain. She was the recipient of New Brunswick's 2010 Lieutenant Governor's Award for English Literary Arts, and in 2014 received an honorary Doctorate of Letters degree from the University of New Brunswick. She is active in her community, serving on boards and

Scribbler. So excited to have Beth Powning answer questions for the ...



Guest Author Bobby Nash. A excerpt from: ALEXANDRA HOLZER'S GHOST GAL:

THE WILD HUNT

Bobby Nash is an award winning author that hails from Bethlehem, Georgia. An exceptionally creative individual that writes novels, comics,...



4Q Interview with musician Andrew Moore.

The Scribbler is very pleased to feature local

musician Andrew Moore on the 4Q Interview this week. A multi-instrumentalist from Moncto...



Visit beautiful Bangladesh with me.....

In my novel, The Dark Side of a Promise ,

much of the action takes place in one of the youngest countries in the world, Bangladesh, pa...



Guest Author Pierre Arsenault of Moncton, New Brunswick

Welcome to part three of the New Brunswick authors series for August and September. As well as writing, Pierre Arsenault is also a freel...

Blog Archive

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► 2014 (49)

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► 2016 (50)

▼ 2017 (2)

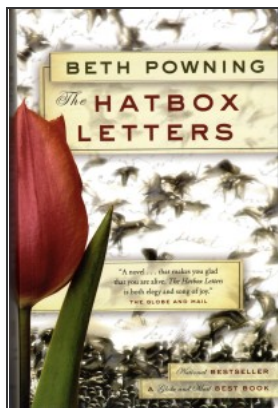
▼ January (2)

Goodbye to another friend.
Lockie Young 1959 - 201...

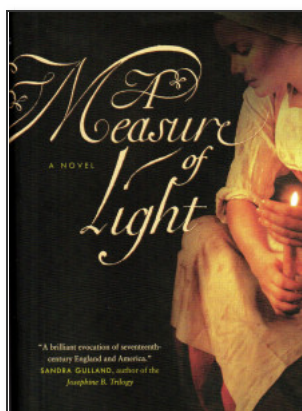
Guest Author Beth Powning
of Markhamville, NB

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SHORTS Vol.1



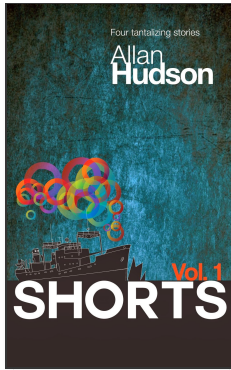
committees. Her newsletters and photography can be seen at www.powning.com/beth.



4Q: I'm a big fan of your novels and it is a real treat to have you as a guest Beth. Your attention to detail and place is a true art. When an idea for a story comes along, what are your writing habits? Do you outline or just sit and write?

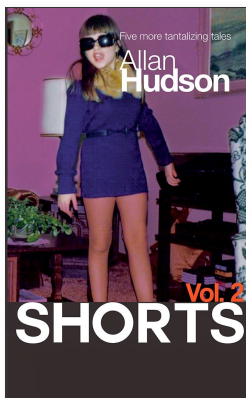
Usually I explore and discard two or three ideas before finally finding the one that is going to work. Sometimes I will write 40-50 pages of something and then know that it's not going anywhere. I go back to dreaming, scribbling ideas in my journal, keeping my mind open, waiting for that unmistakable prickle of excitement. The idea that finally becomes a book is usually something that I have written many pages about in my journal, describing the project to myself. My next step will be to study— in the case of my last two novels, at least a full year. When I am ready to write, I know it because I am thoroughly sick of the research and long to enter the story. I simply *begin*. The novelist E. L. Doctorow, my beloved teacher and mentor, said to his writing students— “You don’t need to begin at the beginning. Start anywhere.” The place I begin writing seldom becomes the actual first sentence of the book. I know that the first draft will be subject to many revisions, so I dive in, flailing about. I don’t know how the book is going to develop; I never have a plot line. If I wrote from an outline, I would not feel as if I were on a quest, a journey. I need to be surprised by what happens. A novel to me is like a question to which I don’t know the answer. I write to find out the answer, I write to take the journey, I write to live in the world that I’m creating.

4Q: There’s been a lot of attention and praise for your latest novel, A Measure of Light and I truly enjoyed the book but my favorite is The Sea Captain’s Wife, both of which are historical. Is this a favorite genre for you?

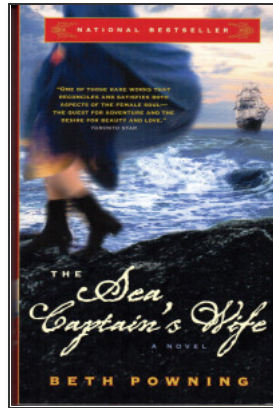


The Ship Breakers - Breaking gigantic ships by hand is dangerous and gruelling work. Many workers are children. The wages are low. (This story received Honorable Mention in the WFN's short story competition) Lloyd and the Baby - A bachelor finds an abandoned baby. What does he do with it? The Shattered Figurine - Detective Josephine (Jo) Naylor is told where to find the next body with a plea to help the killer stop this madness. The Two Grumpy Old Man Cafe - The meals are delicious, the atmosphere perfect and the insults are free.

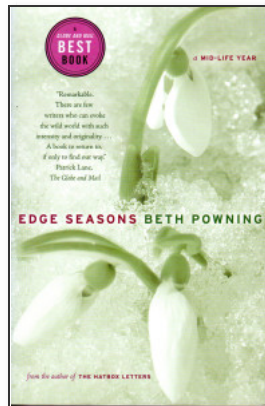
SHORTS Vol.2



Five engaging short stories that will keep you wanting more by this author. *Four Boxes of Memories - Lloyd Minister moves to a nursing home with his most important possessions and he can't take everything with him. *Reaching the Pinnacle - Grandfather and granddaughter hike the highest mountain in their province. Around the campfire, the young lady has something important to tell her Gramps. *Pioneers in a Hurry - A fond recollection of three grown men acting like boys on an all-night camping trip. Being mischievous comes naturally. *Near Dead - Detective Jo Naylor finds herself in the dark. She's not alone. Someone wants her dead. *Six Jutlands and a Conestoga - The Verhoeven family have everything they own in a wagon, children and all. The mysterious west beckons.



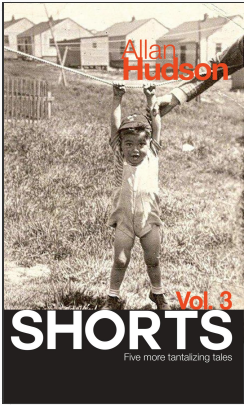
I was asked this question by someone else, recently, and it made me realize the extent to which I was influenced by E. L. Doctorow. All of his novels are fictions built around actual historical events. I grew with houses built in the 18th and 19th centuries, my own childhood house as well as the houses of my grandparents. They were filled with rope-strung beds, creaky floorboards, musty linens. I was surrounded by tangible evidence of the past, so it's not surprising that history crept into my first novel, hatboxes filled with letters that land in Kate's living room, whose unexpected stories help her to move forward after her husband's death. The next two novels were complete surprises to me, and came after stumbling on facts that astonished me and made me aware of my own ignorance and desire to learn. I didn't know that women went to sea with their captain husbands. I had never heard of Mary Dyer nor knew that people had been coldly hanged for their religious beliefs in New England. These facts inhabited compelling stories, stories that I felt needed to be told. Doctorow was one of the first novelists to blur the line between historical fiction and literary fiction. These days, many novels blend history and fiction. I love history, I love learning about history by reading novels. I consider my novels to be literary fiction.



4Q: Some of your earlier works have been inspired by memories. I especially enjoyed Edge Seasons – A Mid-Life year. Please share a childhood memory or anecdote.

My memories are vivid and visceral. I remember the iridescent blur of wasps' wings, sluggish on the sundrenched windowsills of my childhood home. And the sound of the six o'clock bedtime train—the improbable clackety-clack of its wheels as it snaked, hidden, through the dense valley trees. In 1958, when I was nine, most of my friends had televisions, but my parents refused to buy one. I created places to read, like the alternate worlds that I now inhabit when I write. One was a place of many blankets, chair-draped, with a table lamp and pillows, created over the hot-air register, in winter. Another was a tree-house, built by me and my brother (we had several), a platform of boards wedged across branches. One was on what we called "The Indian Rock," a massive boulder in our horse pasture with a smooth and mysterious oval bowl which we thought had been made by hand-grinding corn. One unfortunate one was built on the ground behind the vegetable garden out of hay bales, where I left a pile of library books in a rainstorm. And under the oak tree that I wrote about in *Home* was a shipping crate in which my grandparents had sent home all their belongings when they sold their home in Bermuda; its drafty plywood walls enclosed me and my beloved books and the worlds inside them. I carried on a third-person dialogue inside my head, a constant internal monologue that described *me to me*. "It was getting late, so she started home across the fields." Only after I spent a two-week vacation with a friend did I lose this habit, and then I mourned it.

SHORTS Vol.3



Letting Go - a son deals with his deceased father's "boxes of memories". One Bedroom Ark - Noah Coyne owns a convenience store, the last customer of the night will change his life. Two Boys, One Wagon and a Secret - In the 50's, a young boy's pride was a red wagon. What do they discover one day when they are out filling it up with returnables? No Dying Today - Det. Jo Naylor and her partner search for the man that tried to kill her last night. The Food Bank - some people have too much food, others not enough.

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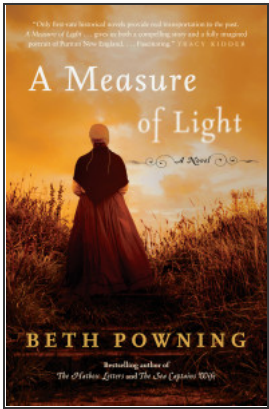
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4Q: What’s next for Beth Powning the author?

I’ve just finished the first draft of a new novel. It takes place in New Brunswick, time-present, with (of course!) a historical thread wound through it. I am just now working through it, editing, so that it reads smoothly enough for me to show to my agent, Jackie Kaiser. Jackie is always my first reader. I usually don’t offer the manuscript to my publishers until I have written three drafts, all of which she reads and comments on. I’m very, very fortunate to have her. Gerard Collins and I have formed a literary committee for our new arts and culture centre here in Sussex. I’ll be doing a lot of work on that in the next year.



Posing with Beth are authors Gerard Collins, Janie Simpson and Jane Tims.



Thank you Beth for taking the time to be our

guest.

Please drop by Beth's web site to discover more about her. I highly recommend her stories.

www.powning.com/beth.

Read The Globe and Mail review of The Sea Captain's Wife [here](#) .

All comments welcome.

Posted by [allan hudson](#) at 08:24

2 comments:



Teresa Karlinski said...

Fascinating interview and author. I checked my bookshelves and am pleased to find two books by BethPowning: The Hatbox Letters and The Shadow Child. I've had these for some time. I have never brought a book home I haven't intended to read. Must get to these soon, especially after this interview for which I thank you South Branch Scribbler. :-)

8 January 2017 at 22:51



allan hudson said...

Thank you for visiting and commenting Teresa. You will never be sorry to pick up one of Beth's books. She is a very keen storyteller. Allan aka The Scribbler.

9 January 2017 at 06:21

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