

The Porcupine's Quill

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Spring 2007

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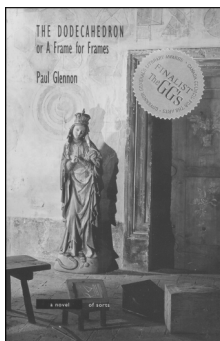


'Spinning the threads of being'

George A. Walker

A Banner Year for Awards

The Porcupine's Quill takes great pride in the achievements of our authors. This past year has seen an abundance of nominations and prizes recognizing the outstanding quality of writing by many of the authors who choose to publish with the little shop on Main Street in Wellington County.



Alcuin Book Design Award

- *A Brazilian Alphabet for the Younger Reader*
P. K. Page (Honourable Mention – Children)

Alberta Literary Award

- *In John Updike's Room*
Christopher Wiseman (Winner – W. O. Mitchell Book Prize)

Danuta Gleed Literary Award

- *Most Wanted*
Vivette Kady (Finalist – First Short Fiction)

ForeWord Magazine/Book of the Year Award

- *The Dodecahedron*
Paul Glennon (Finalist – Fiction)



Globe and Mail/The Globe 100

- *The Dodecahedron*, Paul Glennon
- *Zero Gravity*, Sharon English

Governor General's Literary Award

- *The Dodecahedron*
Paul Glennon (Finalist – English Fiction)

Leipzig Best Book Award

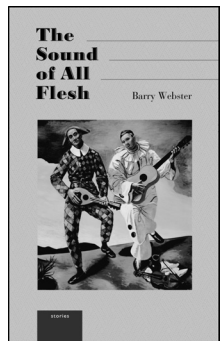
- *Looking for Snails on a Sunday Afternoon*
Rudolf Kurz (Finalist – Excellence in Book Design in Canada)

Ottawa Book Award

- *The Dodecahedron*
Paul Glennon (Finalist – Fiction)

Quebec Writers' Federation Award

- *He Claims He Is the Direct Heir*
Lazar Sarna (Finalist – A. M. Klein Poetry Prize)
- *The Sound of All Flesh*
Barry Webster (Finalist – Hugh MacLennan Fiction Prize)

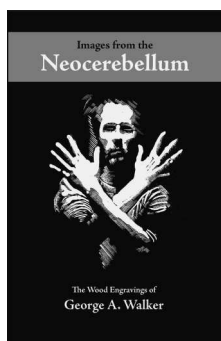


Relit Awards

- *Hot Poppies*
Leon Rooke (Winner – Poetry)
- *The Sound of All Flesh*
Barry Webster (Winner – Short Fiction)

Images from the Neocerebellum

The Wood Engravings of George A. Walker



George A. Walker is an award-winning wood engraver, book artist, teacher, author and illustrator. In this new collection, he presents wood engravings inspired by dreams. Walker's work exploits the REM state, documenting his lucid dream fragments in the form of hand-printed wood engravings. In *Images from the Neocerebellum* one discovers abstractions for a larger audience to explore: pages lifted from the binding of Walker's personal visual dream diary.

Influenced by Carl Jung's theories of the dream's relation to the unconscious, Walker began to explore the dioramas encountered in his enchantment, distilling them into single black and white images in an effort to capture unconscious moments in time. The neocerebellum is that part of the brain that controls visual-spatial, procedural learning and the preparation of complex movements such as would be required in the engraving of lines on a wood block.

In the tradition of printmakers such as William Blake and the French Symbolist Odilon Redon, Walker furrows the psychoanalytic process of bringing the unconscious into the conscious.

George A. Walker had been creating artwork and books and publishing at a variety of private presses since 1984. For over twenty years he has exhibited his wood engravings and limited edition books internationally. Among many book projects Walker has illustrated two hand-printed books written by the American novelist Neil Gaiman. Walker also illustrated the first Canadian editions of Lewis Carroll's *Alice In Wonderland* and *Alice Through the Looking Glass* (Cheshire Cat Press). George A. Walker was elected to the Royal Canadian Academy of Art (RCA) in 2002 for his contribution to the cultural area of Book Arts. He lives in Toronto, and teaches at OCAD.



\$21.95 ISBN 10: 0-88984-291-4 EAN 13: 978-0-88984-291-5 May 2007
ART/Canadian ART 015040 160 pp sewn, paper 5.56" x 8.75"

Black River

Kenneth Sherman



'Everything flows; nothing remains.' With this trenchant quotation from Heraklitos, Kenneth Sherman introduces the theme and the mood of this collection of poems linked by the association of each with a river, the Black, a meandering stream near Sutton, Ontario. With an inspired and wide-ranging mix of history, personal reminiscence and social comment, all of it delivered with frequent allusion and affecting imagery, Sherman draws us into a complex and compelling world.

Alexander Pope has described poetry as:

'What oft' was thought but ne'er so well expressed.'

Succinctness and eloquence: these are the qualities that mark the best poetry. Somehow Kenneth Sherman achieves the near impossible task of blending tragedy with comic irony, the Holocaust and the decimation of Canada's First Nations with the posturing of politicians and that of certain literary impresarios.

The recurring river images evoke echoes of Margaret Laurence's *Diviners*, though her river flowed 'both ways' while Sherman's is a one-way journey. Allusions to death by water, Virginia Woolf and the local ice vendor compound the classical references to Lethe and the Rivers of Babylon to enhance the prevailing mood of sadness and loss. Finishing the work, one is moved to reflect on the complex fabric of ancestry, experience and chance that determine our fates, and one's impulse is to read *Black River* again, and again.

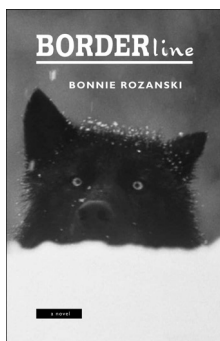
Kenneth Sherman is the author of numerous works, among them the acclaimed *Words for Elephant Man* (1983) and *The Well* (2000). He is a full-time faculty member at Sheridan College in Brampton and he also teaches a course in creative writing at the University of Toronto. He lives in Toronto.



\$14.95 ISBN 10: 0-88984-289-2 EAN 13: 978-0-88984-289-2 March 2007
POETRY/Canadian POE 011000 80 pp sewn paper 5.56"x 8.75"

Borderline

Bonnie Rozanski



Borderline is a skewed coming-of-age story of a normal boy in a crazy world – a fast-paced world of high-tech gizmos, global air travel and antibiotics, a world in which high schools have replaced cafeterias with fast food counters and the scourges of autism, asthma, allergies, diabetes and obesity are the norm. Still another novel about adolescent angst? Well, the protagonist is indeed going on thirteen and, with some justification, he is seriously stressed, but there this wonderful story diverges from the stereotype. Rampant hormones, peer pressure, romance – all take a backseat as Guy Ritter wrestles with the

challenge of attracting the attention of parents preoccupied with the demands of his autistic brother. And then there is the wolf, condemned to euthanasia unless Guy can find a way to spring him loose.

Adolescents will love this book, but there is much here for adult readers as well, including a short treatise on genetics and a graphic evocation of the consequences of a fast-food diet. All of the characters in this story are interesting and believable: Guy's mother, driven to distraction by the needs of her autistic son; his father, the geneticist, preoccupied with his experiments with wolves; a most unorthodox psychiatrist patiently seeking a breakthrough with a stubbornly unresponsive patient. And the most fascinating of all, Austin, who, at the age of five cannot speak but can take apart and re-assemble any electronic gadget, including the lock on a wolf's cage.

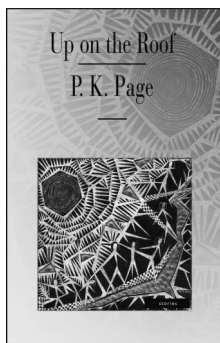
Bonnie Rozanski has worked in both academia and business but has decided to return to her first love, writing. She has written several books in which scientific issues inform the plots, as well as two prize-winning plays. *Banana Kiss* (PQL 2005) was her debut novel. She lives in New Jersey.



\$22.95 ISBN 10: 0-88984-293-0 EAN 13: 978-0-88984-293-9 May 2007
JUVENILE FICTION/Ages 15+ JUV 005000 224 pp sewn paper 5.56"x 8.75"

Up on the Roof

P. K. Page



'A flashlight, a frying pan, a library, a piece of marble – you will encounter all these objects in the worlds P. K. Page invents for you in these pages. It's hard to imagine so many authorial impersonations in one book: a middle-aged gardener retreats from domestic chaos to the privacy of his rooftop shelter; a young man discovers his parents' library as solace for a broken heart; a child whose parents are pigeon breeders makes beautiful objects of feathers. All the stories have in common the impeccable verbal magic that is P. K. Page's unique poetic signature. And beneath is a profound meditation. What is fiction,

what is fact? Is there anything we can call truth? And who is the tremulous 'we', desperately trying to fix a location in this multiple, endlessly metamorphic, lonely cosmos. With an understanding earned by a lifetime of attention, Page assures us that this cosmos is threaded with love, if we are brave enough to search for it.' – Rosemary Sullivan

In praise of P. K. Page's skill as storyteller Constance Rooke has written (about *A Kind of Fiction*): 'These stories ... all intriguing ... cast new light on the work and times and multi-faceted sensibility of a great poet.' In *Up on the Roof* the reader will once again fall under the charm of a master of language.

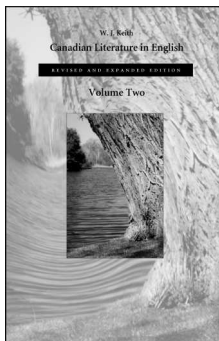
P. K. Page is the author of more than a dozen books, including ten volumes of poetry, a novel, selected short stories, three books for children, and a memoir. A two-volume edition of Page's collected poems, *The Hidden Room* (PQL), was published in 1997. In addition to winning the Governor General's award for poetry (1957), she was appointed a Companion of the Order of Canada in 1998. In 2003 her selected poems *Planet Earth* was short listed for the coveted Griffin Poetry Prize. She lives in Victoria, BC.



\$18.95 ISBN 10: 0-88984-287-6 EAN 13: 978-0-88984-287-8 March 2007

FICTION/Short Stories (single author) FIC 029000 144 pp sewn paper 5.56" x 8.75"

Volume Two Canadian Literature in English W. J. Keith



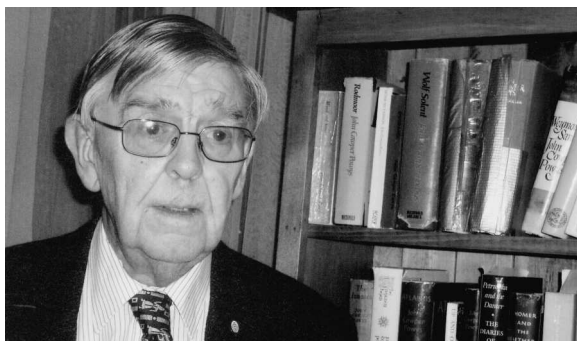
W. J. Keith has enhanced and complemented his *Canadian Literature in English*, originally published in 1985, with a substantial update, and with what he calls a 'Polemical Conclusion' – a stimulating and provocative argument about the quality and direction of Canadian literature.

Newly released, Volume One (see page 8) of the Revised Edition included 'Beginnings', first in the prose travel journals of Alexander Mackenzie and Samuel Hearne, then in Poetry, and finally in Fiction up to the publication in 1904 of Sara Jeanette Duncan's *The Imperialist*. Part Two, Poetry,

presented the Challenge of Modernism embraced by E. J. Pratt, F. R. Scott, A. M. Klein and A. J. M. Smith, examined the Mythic Versus the Human, and concluded with Plain Talk About Past and Present that delivered us to the early work of Don Coles, Stephen Scobie and David Solway.

The companion **Volume Two** includes a parallel examination of Fiction and an Update on the past Twenty Years before launching into a Polemical Conclusion self-described as a 'dark and for the most part depressing journey' in which a *trahison des clerics* (treason of the intellectuals) is identified by which universities have abandoned 'their position as centres of excellence and independent inquiry to become employment-oriented training institutions emphasizing marketable skills.'

W. J. Keith came to Canada in 1958. He taught first at McMaster, then later at the UofT. Since 1995 he has held the position of Professor Emeritus of English at University College. He edited the *University of Toronto Quarterly* (1976–85) and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1979.

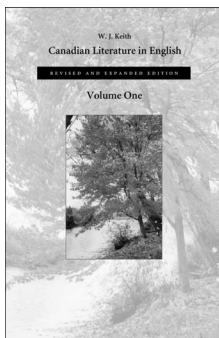


\$24.95 ISBN 10: 0-88984-285-X EAN 13: 978-0-88984-285-4 February 2007
LIT 004080 Criticism 208 pp sewn paper 5.56"x 8.75"

Volume One

Canadian Literature in English

W. J. Keith



When *Canadian Literature in English* was first published by Longman in 1985 it was described (in the *Modern Language Review*) as 'the best critical account of its subject that we possess so far'. The book was released in London and New York but never distributed particularly well in Canada, where it faded, rapidly, from view. W. J. Keith, writing in the Preface to the Revised Edition, admits his first inclination was to embark on a total rewrite of the Longman edition. On further consideration, however, Keith came to realize that the 1985 publication was completed at 'the close of a major

phase in the Canadian literary tradition' and that the 'remarkable flowering that began to manifest itself in the middle of the twentieth century had run its course by the beginning of the new millennium.' That being the case, Keith would argue that a 'number of writers who had already achieved [considerable] stature further developed their reputations' (in the period 1985–2005) 'but only a few extended them'. Keith is also quick to admit that he has chosen to ignore utterly the 'popular' at the one extreme, as well as the 'avant-garde' at the other, in favour of those authors whose style lends itself to the simple pleasure of reading, and to that end he dedicates his history 'to all those who recognize and celebrate the dance of words'.

Those who love literature, and especially fans of our national brand, will appreciate the insights provided by Keith about our earliest writers – the ones we do not tend to encounter in academia or in the bookstores. The travel writings of Hearne and Mackenzie and Thompson ... 'helped indirectly but palpably to initiate a Canadian literary tradition'.

'This is a diverse set of essays ... which may be read individually as commentaries on Louis Dudek, Margaret Atwood, John Metcalf, Philip Grove, Ethel Wilson, Robertson Davies, Margaret Laurence, Hugh Hood, and Jack Hodgins; or together as a manifesto on modern Canadian criticism and literature. Either way, the reading is a salutary experience whose conclusion is summed up in Keith's essay on Atwood's *Bluebeard's Egg*: "We need to approach literature not with made-to-measure theory but with a flexible, verbally sensitive critical practice that attempts, tentatively, humbly, sometimes painfully, to develop a tradition of close and accurate reading"'

– R. G. Moyles, *Canadian Book Review Annual*

The companion Volume Two is now available (see page 7). W. J. Keith continues his analysis delivering an insightful conclusion on literature in Canada.

\$24.95 ISBN 10: 0-88984-283-3 EAN 13: 978-0-88984-283-0 Winter 2006
LIT 004080 Criticism 208 pp sewn paper 5.56"x 8.75"

The Inverted Line

George A. Walker



The Mad Hatter of Canadian printmaking George A. Walker has assembled into one volume a collection of engravings crafted during his varied career. Why call the collection *The Inverted Line*? Walker explains: 'What I find seductive about wood engraving is the inversion of the line and the image.... I call it the inverted line. There are two reasons for this: the first is that the wood engraver is working with white lines in negative space; the second is that the image is drawn backwards on the block before it's printed. However you see it, the black line of the artist's pen is transformed by its passage from the matrix

to the impression on the paper. For every black line, the engraver must cut two white lines on either side. It is this inversion of the lines, shapes and pattern that appeals to my temperament and begs to be exploited.'

'Walker's engravings are distanced from the twentieth-century English tradition exemplified by Gill and Gillings: for example, he often uses a dentist's drill to rout out deep grooves. This is not an inconsequential labour-saving technique: it gives the images more of a folk-art feel and dramatizes his symbolic and often surreal compositions.' – Paul Razzell, *Parenthesis*

'The greatest compliment I can pay it [*The Inverted Line*] is, there is not a dull spot in the book. He can present us with humour without a hint of them being cartoons. I think he must have fun doing these prints. It is a good example of drawing straight to the point, and not fussing with a lot of extra stuff. These drawings wiggle and dance in space. They are small in scale, but each is huge in heart. They look like they are chiseled out of rock. I've had this book laying around, and when a visitor picks it up, I hear exclamations of surprise and awe.' – James Horton, *Block & Burin*

'... give [Walker] his head ... and you see an artist of sustained and wacky integrity half way between Posada and Krazy Kat.... But Walker does things with engraving I've not seen anyone else do ...'

– Simon Brett, *Newsletter of the Society of Wood Engravers*

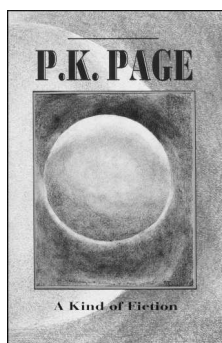


George A. Walker teaches popular courses in book arts and printmaking at the Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto, where he is Associate Professor. More biographical detail and information about his new book, *Images from the Neocerebellum*, is presented on page 3.

\$15.95 ISBN 10: 0-88984-214-0 EAN 13: 978-0-88984-214-4 Spring 2000
ART/Canadian ART 015040 176 pp sewn, paper 5.56"x 8.75"

A Kind of Fiction

P. K. Page



Acclaimed poet P. K. Page weaves together an astonishing range of characters and themes in this remarkable selection of stories written over the last fifty years and collected here for the first time.

A Kind of Fiction bears witness to an accomplished prose stylist and displays the same lively and witty intelligence that established Page's reputation as one of Canada's finest poets. Page emerges as a writer with an agile and playful imagination, comfortable with a range of narrative styles that include the comic and surreal plots of her early pieces from the 1940s, adaptations of Indian and Sufi tales, and

complex psychological portraits of her recent work. Despite the variety of styles and themes, all the stories in this collection bear the imprint of a refined artistic vision and a sense of technique and form which has been the defining characteristic of her distinguished body of poetry.

Baroque furniture, the colour of cinnamon bark. Black-and-white drawings – di Cavalcanti's line as wide as if done with his little finger. Portinari's small purl-purl-purl on thin needles. It is all of a piece with his house but disconcerting to find it here in his office where we must talk, once again, of my uterus. I had thought that finished. The di Cavalcanti seated nude is drawn in an almost continuous line. – from 'Fever'

'*A Kind of Fiction* collects most of the short fiction that poet and painter P. K. Page published between 1942 and 2001. This slim and eclectic volume ranges from her early forays into urban realism to a dramatization of Jalaludin Rumi's fable of 'The Blind Men and the Elephant', an elegiac meditation on spiritual transcendence ('Unless the Eye Catch Fire'), a fairy tale ('The Sky Tree'), and a handful of magnificent stories of old age.... The finest pieces are distinguished by her profound but unsentimental sympathy for her characters and her gently satiric humour.' – Jack Ilingworth, amazon.ca

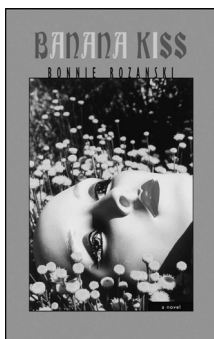
A much-respected and admired writer over the last five decades, P. K. Page is also a painter whose work has been widely exhibited. One of her own paintings graces the cover of *A Kind of Fiction*. P. K. Page's most recent book is *Hand Luggage: A Memoir in Verse* (PQL 2006) an intimate, personal, extended 84-page poem describing with acute detail the life and history of an iconoclastic poet.

\$19.95 ISBN 10: 0-88984-220-5 EAN 13: 978-0-88984-220-5 Spring 2001

FICTION/Short Stories (single author) FIC 029000 192 pp sewn paper 5.56"x 8.75"

Banana Kiss

Bonnie Rozanski



Robin Farber lives in a psychiatric institution. In her mind, she creates the world by looking at it: a quantum theory-world where matter pops in and out of existence as she observes it, a world where she is God. And, because the reader of *Banana Kiss* must take a long look through her schizophrenic eyes, this is our world, too, a world where the disembodied voices Robin hears are often more real than the people who stand in front of her. Her father, a sailor who died when she was a baby, shows up in her head whenever he's on leave.

Derek, her charming, lovelorn friend, goes from mania to depression and back several times a day. There's her insufferable sister Melissa, who stole her boyfriend, Max. And, of course, Dr Mankiewicz, or 'Whitecoat', the long-suffering therapist who, Robin tells us, 'thinks there are some things that are real, and some things that are not, and that he knows better than anyone else'. Finally there is Robin herself ...

'Lest you think the book's a downer, it's Robin's comic insight and moments that lighten what could otherwise be a harrowing read. Mental illness is nothing less.... Yet Rozanski imbues Robin's story with hope despite the psychical traumas Robin suffers.' — Kinneret Globerman, *Ottawa Jewish Bulletin*

'*Banana Kiss* is a sympathetic but never mawkish portrayal of a woman who suffers the horrors of a damaged mind and yet always retains her dignity. We can deeply empathize with Robin's world. Her unique version of reality is portrayed with so much truth that we begin to understand how it's possible that such a world can make sense in Robin's mind.' — Laurel Smith, *Quill & Quire*

'Ultimately, Robin is a heartbreaker, because she is so vibrantly written that her isolation and compassionate nature make her psychosis feel real, and elicit sympathy at a much deeper level than would have occurred in a novel that didn't originate from within her fractured mind.... Rozanski wisely concentrates ... on making Robin as tangible as possible, and because of this she lingers long after the last page.' — Elizabeth Millard, *Foreword Magazine*

'Rozanski writes with a keen-edged, cool precision. The tone is distinct from Robin's hysteria, but allows a unique perspective into her mind as she struggles through daily life.... *Banana Kiss* ... is powerful, compelling storytelling and a unique reading experience.' — Robert Wiersema, *The Globe and Mail*

Bonnie Rozanski currently lives in New Jersey. She has degrees from the University of Pennsylvania, Adelphi University and the University of Guelph. Information about her new novel, *Borderline*, is presented on page 6.

\$22.95 ISBN 10: 0-88984-276-0 EAN 13: 978-0-88984-276-2 Fall 2005
FICTION/Novel FIC 019000 240 pp sewn paper 5.56"x 8.75"

Books in Print

This is a partial list. For a complete listing of all of our backlist check our website: www.sentex.net/~pq1

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