

# **GRADE 11 ISU READING LIST**

## **CANADIAN and CLASSICS**

### *The Cure for Death by Lightning*

#### **Andersen – Dergatz, Gail**

Set during the Second World War, this novel focuses on a year in the life of the main character, an adolescent girl growing up in rural B.C., in a village close to a Native reservation. It is a sometimes disturbing tale of the limitations of human nature, with most unusual characters.

### *A Recipe for Bees*

Augusta Olsen's quest for love and independence spans a lifetime. Filled with bee lore, rich domestic detail and wondrous rural imagery, at the heart is the life, death and resurrection of an extraordinary marriage.

### *Alias Grace*

#### **Atwood, Margaret**

It is fact that in 1843 in Toronto, 16 year old Grace Marks was found guilty of murdering her employer and his housekeeper/mistress. Told in several voices, Atwood conveys a revealing portrait of the harsh existence of women and the poor, while challenging the reader to discover if Grace is a blood thirsty feminist or a helpless victim.

### *The Blind Assassin (winner of the Man Booker 2000)*

Iris, the elderly sister of pulp novelist Laura Chase, reflects on both their lives in this lyrical and darkly humorous novel-within-a-novel. Iris recounts her sister's alarming death, their motherless childhood and the posthumous publication of her controversial science fiction novel, *The Blind Assassin*.

### *Cat's Eye*

As an adult, Elaine Risley retraces with wit and poignancy the journey into adulthood of herself and her nasty friends.

### *Oryx and Crake*

Entering the realm of science fiction, Atwood's latest novel creates an alarmingly plausible dystopian vision of our biologically re-engineered world in the late 21<sup>st</sup> century, and a cautionary flashback tale of how this bio-technical dystopia came about. This is an uneasy novel that pricks our social conscience and poses crucial questions for our own time.

Also *Surfacing*, *Lady Oracle*, *Life Before Man*, *Bodily Harm*, *The Robber Bride*, *Children of the Flood*.

*Can you hear the Nightbird Call?*

**Badami, Anita Rau**

Large in scope, this novel set in India and Canada, spanning 5 decades tells the story of women connected by family and friendship. As South Asian immigrants in Vancouver march across the stage of the Delhi Junction Café and India is torn apart by the assassination of Indira Gandhi and the massacre at the Golden Temple, the plot expands towards the Air India bombing in 1985.

*The Hero's Walk*

In India, Sripathi, an embittered old copywriter is slowly transformed by his Canadian granddaughter after her parents are killed in a car accident.

*What the Body Remembers*

**Baldwin, Shauna Singh**

Roop is the young and beautiful second wife of a wealthy man who is kind, yet uncompromisingly traditional. As the danger of domestic politics is mirrored in the violence that consumes India as the country is torn apart by the partition of 1947, Roop must find strength from within to survive.

*The Island Walkers*

**Bemrose, John**

Set in an Ontario mill town in the 1960s, the novel is a profoundly moving consideration of intergenerational conflict, class division and the loss of innocence

*A Serious Widow*

**Beresford – Howe, Constance**

After 30 years of marriage, Rowena discovers, at her husband's funeral, that he was also married to another woman. At the age of 50, with little formal education and no job skills, she must face the fact that she was never legally married and will inherit nothing. A coming of age story, late in life, this is a novel filled with insight and wry gentle humour.

Also, *The Book of Eve*, *A Population of One*, and *The Marriage Bed*.

*The Time in Between (2005 Giller Prize)*

**Bergen, David**

This is the story of Charles Boatman, a Vietnam veteran, who leaves the Fraser Valley of British Columbia to return to the country where he fought twenty-nine years earlier. When he disappears, his 2 children travel to Vietnam, follow slim leads, chase their father's shadow, and meet an extraordinary cast of characters. Their quest will take them into the heart of a beautiful but incomprehensible country and reveal the heartbreaking truth of his long-kept secret.

*The Ash Garden*

**Bock, Dennis**

When the atomic bomb exploded over Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 the world changed in a few terrible minutes. Sweeping from Germany to America to Japan, from New York City

tenements to a small Ontario town, the story weaves together the destinies of three people whose lives are caught up in war and its aftermath. Aton, the brilliant German Scientist is sure of his role in history; his orphaned part - Jewish wife Sophie must now find a way to redefine herself and thirdly, Emiko the young Japanese girl who is mutilated by the bomb, faces a lifetime of suffering, psychic pain and questions.

*The Communist's Daughter*

This is a story of love and betrayal in a time of war: from the Belgian trenches of the Great War where Dr. Norman Bethune tries to rescue doomed soldiers, to the Spanish Front, where the injured await bottles of transfusion blood that he transports by car to the hidden cave in Northern China where an elusive Mao steps out of the shadows to meet the remarkable Canadian doctor.

*What it Takes to be Human*

**Bowering, Marilyn**

Sandy Grey, the narrator, is incarcerated in an asylum filled with lawlessness and bullies. Along with all the other characters in this novel he is reduced to his most basic instincts as he struggles to retain his sanity in a universe that has gone completely mad.

*Three Day Road*

**Boyden, Joseph**

Told in the alternating voices of Xavier Bird returning home grievously wounded by the war, and his aging aunt Nisha, an Oji-Cree healer, this darkly beautiful tale speaks of friendship, madness, war, and cultural extinction.

*Through Black Spruce*

Centred around the First Nations Community in Moosenee, Ontario, Boyden examines the tragic loss of the traditional Cree ways of life and the problems of drug abuse. Searching for her missing sister who was a model in New York, the narrator must shed her tomboy past and re-evaluate her own identity

*What We All Long For*

**Dione Brand**

Set in a downtown Toronto loft apartment, this novel details the uncharted aspects of urban life, the bitterness of youth and the secrets families try to hide.

*The Rules of Engagement*

**Bush, Catherine**

The title refers to rules of engagement in love and war – relationships and seductions and duels and modern “strikes” and invasions. The protagonist escapes to England and a life of seclusion after she is the cause of a duel fought between two modern university students.

*Claire's Head*

In a family where the parents have died tragically, two of the sisters cope with debilitating migraines. When the oldest disappears, Claire, the youngest, retraces her sister's steps in a journey which becomes a personal quest towards self-knowledge.

*After Helen*

**Cavanagh, Paul**

After the death of his wife, Irving Donnelly finds himself on a cross-country journey to find, understand, and reclaim and understand his rebellious daughter. On the road he revisits his past with his wife Helen, and comes face to face with long buried family secrets.

*The Jade Peony*

**Choy, Wayson**

Chinatown, Vancouver, in the late 1930s and '40s provides the setting for this poignant novel, told through the vivid and intense reminiscences of the three younger children of an immigrant family. The characters are "neither this nor that," neither entirely Canadian nor Chinese. But with each other's help, they survive hardship and outbreak with grit and humour.

*The Origin of Waves*

**Clarke, Austin**

Two elderly Barbadian men, close friends from childhood, who haven't seen each other in fifty years, exchange stories and memories of the past. As the two men reveal their innermost truths, the novel explores the dislocations of place, the nature of memory and the past.

**OTHERS BY HIM??**

*Elizabeth and After*

**Cohen, Matt**

Two love stories, one past, one present, mirror each other in this story of ambition, sex, memory and marriage. Set in small-town Ontario, it is rich in insights about human foibles and aspirations.

*All Families Are Psychotic*

**Coupland, Douglas**

The last time this wildly dysfunctional family got together, gunplay was on the menu. Only the fact that their one shining star, Sarah, an astronaut, is about to be launched into space at Cape Canaveral, tempts them to try togetherness again. The state of Florida may never recover from the Drummond version of fun in the sun.

*Generation X*

Andy, Claire, and Doug are adrift in the California desert, working McJobs (low paying, low prestige, low benefits, no future jobs) and despite being fanatically independent, each longs for permanence, love, and a home.

### *Girlfriend in a Coma*

While Karen is in a coma, her friends pass through their careers as models, special effects technicians, doctors, and demolition experts, before finally reunited on a conspiracy-driven supernatural television series and by Karen's reawakening.

### *Jpod*

Six co-workers, whose names start with J, are employed on the fringes of a massive Vancouver game design company. They daily confront the forces that define our era: global piracy, boneheaded marketing staff, people smuggling, the rise of China, marijuana grow-ops, and the remnants of the burst tech bubble of the nineties.

### *Shampoo Planet*

Tyler is a 20 year old aspiring to a career with a corporation his hippie mother once firebombed. This six month chronicle of his life takes us to Paris, the Redwood forest of Northern California, cheesy Hollywood, ultra-modern Seattle and finally back home. A voyage filled with rock videos, toxic waste, French-fry computers and clear cut forests – this is a spellbinding novel of a generation coming of age as the millennium comes to a close.

### *The Gum Thief*

Meet Roger, a divorced middle aged employee at a Staples outlet, condemned to restocking 20lb. bond paper for the rest of his life, and his co-worker Bethany, who is at the end of her goth phase and realizing she is facing 50 years of shelving Post-it notes. When Bethany opens Roger's notebook, she discovers that this old guy who she has never considered human is writing a mock diary pretending to be her – and spookily he is getting it right. These two retail workers strike up an unlikely yet touching secret correspondence.

### *A Good Death*

#### **Courtemanche, Gil**

As a family gathers for their obligatory Christmas dinner, they laugh and cry, argue, and joke their way through the long night while facing the critical illness of their father. The eldest son, Andre, calls forth memories, both sweet and painful, challenging his own emotions and struggles with the impossible question, What is a good death?

### *River Thieves*

#### **Crummey, Michael**

This is an historical novel set in the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Newfoundland. The colony is in its early days and its settlers live a harsh pioneer existence. The novel explores the white man's relationship with the Beothuk tribe who disappeared in the 1830s.

### *Man of Bone*

#### **Cumyn, Alan**

This is a very contemporary tale about abduction and torture told from the point of view of the Canadian diplomat who is (probably mistakenly) kidnapped by terrorists.

**NEW BOOK???**

### *Rockbound*

**Day, Frank Parker**

Rockbound is an island in the Atlantic, isolated by fog and storm and winter weather. The inhabitants are fisherman farmers, in turns, cruel, wild, cunning, generous and loving in this dark and savage, yet compassionate story.

*The Last Concubine***Downer, Lesley**

Growing up deep in the mountains of Japan, 1861, the protagonist, Sachi, has always felt different, her pale skin and fine features setting her apart from friends and family. Her quiet though mysterious life is quickly uprooted as she is selected by an imperial princess to serve as a lady in waiting, and later, by the imperial shogun, to serve as his concubine. However as Japan experiences westernization and civil war erupts, Sachi must unravel the truth of her origins, her rank, and ultimately, herself.

*The Piano Man's Daughter***Findley, Timothy**

In 1939, just before the outbreak of World War II, a young piano tuner, Charlie Kelworth, faces two enigmatic questions: Who was his father?, and given the madness that consumed his mother, does he dare become a father himself? As with his other novels: *Famous Last Words*, *Not Wanted on the Voyage*, and *Headhunter*, this novel could be regarded as an exploration of the nature of truth.

*Pilgrim*

On April 15, 1912, Pilgrim is admitted to the Burgholzli Psychiatric Clinic in Zurich, Switzerland, having failed once again in an attempt at suicide. So begins a momentous battle of psyche and soul between Jung, self-professed mystical scientist of the mind, and Pilgrim – the man who cannot die.

*The Cellist of Sarajevo***Galloway, Steven**

The story of the human spirit under extraordinary duress, Galloway's novel centres around three people trying to survive in a city under siege, where even going for water is a life and death experience.

*Sweetness in the Belly***Gibb, Camilla**

Gibb takes us on a journey to Ethiopia, and tells the remarkable story of Lilly's discovery of an unexpected place for herself within the walls of the ancient city of Harar, a revered centre of Islam. However, Ethiopia veers toward revolution and Lilly must flee to England where she and other refugees live in exile in a bleak housing flat.

*The Romantic***Gowdy, Barbara**

When she is nine years old, Louise Kirk's former beauty queen mother disappears. Louise transfers her devotion to her motherly neighbour, Mrs. Richter and her nature-loving son,

Abel. From this childhood friendship evolves a love that will bind Louise and Abel for the rest of their lives. This is an exquisite novel of love, loss and the journey into adulthood.

**ELEPHANT???**

*DeNiro's Game*

**Hage, Rawi**

To fund his escape from war-ravaged Beirut, Lebanon, Bassam enters a scheme with his best friend George, to skim funds from a poker arcade where George works. When George rises to the top ranks of the militia the friends continue to indulge in freewheeling lawlessness until betrayal and violence more ferocious than anything the young thugs had bargained for erupts.

*A Student of Weather*

**Hay, Elizabeth**

“Two sisters fell down the same well, and the well was Maurice Dove.” Acclaimed Canadian short story writer Hay’s novel, is a compelling and highly original debut telling the story of two sisters and the jealousy that irrevocably changes their lives when a young student comes to stay on their father’s Saskatchewan farm in the 1930s.

*Any Known Blood*

**Hill, Lawrence**

This compelling story, following 5 generations of an African-Canadian-American family, slips effortlessly from the slave trade of 19<sup>th</sup> century Virginia to the modern, predominantly white suburbs of Oakville Ont. (once a final stop on the Underground Railroad). It is an engrossing tale about the quest of Langston Cane V. the divorced eldest son of a white mother and prominent black father. His journey becomes both a quest for his family’s past and for his own sense of self.

*The Book of Negroes*

When Aminata Diallo sits down to write the story of her life at the dawn of the nineteenth century, she has a world of experience behind her. Abducted as a child in West Africa she survives the long march to the sea, months in the hold of a slave ship, and the body and soul destroying effects of slavery. Ultimately she becomes a spokesperson for the antislavery movement in England. This remarkable novel transports the reader from an African village to a plantation in the United States, from a soured refuge in Nova Scotia to a shanty town for freed slaves in Sierra Leon, as it tells the story of one of the strongest characters in recent fiction.

*The Invention of the World*

**Hodgins, Jack**

Here is a magical, boisterous, brawling novel, set in the mists of Ireland and the rain forests of the Pacific Northwest, a novel about heroes and what becomes of them. The book mingles history, personal experience, and sheer verbal invention in a complex yet powerful way.

*The Ivory Swing*

## **Hospital, Janette Turner**

Juliet experiences culture shock in India where women are not accepted as equal to men.

### *Oyster*

Challenging and “poetic” in style, this is a novel about the opal mines in Australia’s Queensland and one particular charismatic but cruel and relentless character who created a commune and seduced young people to work in the mines as part of his religion. It is a very Apocalyptic novel and the uncertainty of the approaching millennium is one of the fears on which Oyster preys.

### *Coventry*

## **Helen Humphreys**

On the evening of November 14, 1940, Harriet Marsh stands on the roof of Coventry Cathedral and watches as the waves of German bombers approach. As firestorms sweep through the streets, Harriet flees alongside a young fire-watcher named Jeremy, who is searching for his mother. Scenes of unspeakable devastation unfold around them: birds burn as they fly; historic buildings collapse; people are buried alive beneath the rubble. But as Harriet attempts to guide Jeremy through the burning city, she discovers in the midst of death a love she thought she had lost forever.

### *Deafening*

## **Itani, Frances**

Set during the Great War, and spanning two continents, *Deafening* tells the story of Grania, a young deaf woman, who falls in love with Jim, a hearing man. Jim leaves to become a stretcher-bearer on the Western Front, a place filled with unforgiving noise, violence and death, but together they attempt to sustain their love in a world that is brutal and beautiful.

### *The Colony of Unrequited Dreams*

## **Johnston, Wayne**

A mystery and a love story spanning five decades, this is an epic portrait of relentless ambition. Although a fictional account, the story parallels the lives of Joe Smallwood, who claws his way from obscurity to become Newfoundland’s first Premier, and Sheilagh Fielding, a popular newspaper columnist who casts a haunting shadow over Smallwood’s life and career.

### *The Navigator of New York*

Johnston draws on historical events to build his new novel. A fierce duel was waged during the years 1907-09 between Adm. Robert Peary and Dr. Federick Cook, each claiming to have been the first to reach the North Pole. Against the backdrop of this dispute, Johnston tells the story of a lonely Newfoundland boy named Devlin Stead who grows up under a shadow because his parents reputedly committed suicide.



*The Green Library*

**Keefer, Janice**

Eva, a young Toronto woman, ends her quest to be ordinary when she begins a journey that reaches deep into memory and the unknown history of her family. Set in the past and present, in Ukraine and in Canada, this is complex tale of love, betrayal and the profound need to belong to a place and a people.

*The Rain Ascends*

**Kogawa, Joy**

This book deals with a very difficult subject-that of homosexuality and an adult's abuse of young children. Kogawa's writing is not only powerful but unusually poetic as she deals with the impact of a much loved but abusive father (and minister) on his family and others.

*The Girls*

**Lansens, Lori**

Rose and Ruby Darlen were born joined at the head, and although they were abandoned by their frightened teenage mother, the sisters attempt to lead a normal life. Rose, who has a passion for writing, wants to write her version of a life conjoined, but because their lives are so closely shared, Ruby insists on writing the occasional chapter. The results are surprising, humorous and poignant, in this life-affirming novel.

**ADD NEW BOOK**

*Crow Lake*

**Lawson, Mary**

Four hundred miles away from the tiny northern community she grew up in, esteemed zoologist, Kate Morrison, must come to terms with the loss of her parents, complex memories of her family and her own turbulent childhood. The tragedies of her past, especially those associated with her beloved older brother, continue to strangle her adult relationships.

***Other Side of the Bridge***

*Fall on Your Knees*

**MacDonald, Ann-Marie**

This beautifully written Canadian novel chronicles the lives of three generations of a family. MacDonald creates very complex situations and characters whose lives are very much influenced by each other and the Cape Breton landscape.

*The Way the Crow Flies*

During the excitement of the sixties space race and the menace of the Cold War, eight-year-old Madeleine's sheltered life on a Canadian Air Force base is shattered when her 16 year old neighbour is accused of rape and murder.

*No Great Mischief*

**MacLeod, Alistair**

Although Alexander and his twin sister have left Cape Breton and prospered, they are haunted by their past. In this spellbinding story of family, he recollects the heroic stories of his people: loggers, miners, drinkers, adventurers; men forever in exile yet forever linked to their ancestors.

*Where White Horses Gallop*

**MacNeil, Beatrice**

Three friends enlist in the legendary Cape Breton Highlanders and sail off to war in 1941. As the families wait for word of their fate, MacNeil paints a haunting picture of a war which rather than ennobling the young men, destroys their bodies and minds.

*Fugitive Pieces*

**Michaels, Anne**

Set mainly in Greece and Canada, Michaels takes a unique approach to the Holocaust and the redemptive power of love. Using a dual narrative, she asks the reader to make subtle connections between the present and the past.

*The Winter Vault*

*Such a Long Journey*

**Mistry, Rohinton**

Set in 1971 in Bombay, India, this novel tells the story of Gustad Noble, a dedicated bank clerk who finds his life unraveling as his son rejects him, his best friend involves him in political intrigue, and his country is changed by nationalism and world tensions.

*A Fine Balance*

Set in India during the mid-1970s this novel is a stunning portrayal of a country undergoing change. Large in scope, the narrative focuses on four people who come together in a flat in the city of Bombay soon after the government declares a "State of Internal Emergency." The story reaches back in time to follow the stories of these four people – the lives they began with, the places they left behind – as they spend their days balanced between hope and despair.

*Family Matters*

Mistry's magnificent novel tells the story of a familial love and obligation; political and personal corruption; memory's ability to keep truth alive and the danger of memory denied. At once sweeping and intimate, comic and tragic, it focuses on siblings and their squabbling over the care of their elderly father.

*Alligator*

**Moore, Lisa**

Meet Colleen, a seventeen-year-old eco-terrorist who is coming of age while her mother is cloaked in grief after the death of her husband, and her sister is obsess with completing a brilliant film before she dies. *Alligator*'s world of St John's Newfoundland is an often humorous place of desire, greed, lust, and ambition, where a benevolent hotdog vendor, a sociopath Russian sailor, and a self-absorbed actress all collide.

*Anil's Ghost*

**Ondaatje, Michael**

Anil Tissera, born in Sri Lanka, educated in the West, is sent by an international human-rights group to work with local officials in her homeland to discover the source of the organized campaigns of murder engulfing the island. A riveting mystery, this is also a novel about love, about family, about loss, about the unknown enemy and about the quest to unlock the hidden past. An elusive and ambiguous novel, Ondaatje reminds us that truth does not always bring clarity.

*Divisarado*

This novel takes us from the city of San Francisco to the backrooms of Nevada's casinos, to south central France 50 years earlier, as we meet a makeshift family driven by an act of violence.

*Lullabies for Little Criminals*

**O'Neill, Heather**

In this searing story of a young life on the streets, Baby lives with her father, Jules, who takes better care of his heroin habit than he does his daughter. Although she is still young enough to drag her dolls around in a vinyl suitcase, Baby's blossoming beauty captures the attention of a dangerous local pimp and it will take all her strength, wit, and luck to survive.

*Rockbound*

**Parker, Day, Frank**

Rockbound is an island in the Atlantic, isolated by fog and storm and winter weather. The inhabitants are fisherman farmers, in turns, cruel, wild, cunning, generous and loving in this dark and savage, yet compassionate story.

*The Shipping News*

**Proulx, E. Annie**

A rather pathetic man, Quoye, is deserted by his wife. With his two young daughters, he returns to Newfoundland, the home of his disreputable ancestors, to rebuild his and his daughter's lives. The story is funny, touching and rich in description of Newfoundland life.

*Postcards*

This is the story of the Blood family (New England farmers) who must confront the twentieth century, as well as their own extinction. Loyal Blood, the eldest son, is forced to abandon the farm when he takes his lover's life. Yearning for love, yet forced by circumstance to be eternally alone, Loyal comes to symbolize the alienation and frustration behind the American dream.

*Galveston*

**Quarrington, Paul**

Three disparate characters fly to the tiny Caribbean island of Dampie Cay, not for a tan or fun in the sun, but because they have reason to believe that they might encounter something there that most people take great measures to avoid – a hurricane. Harrowing, yet spiced with humour, *Galveston* is a tale of love and loss – and finding redemption in the eye of a hurricane.

**NEW BOOK?? QUARRY??**

*Evening Snow Will Bring Such Peace*

**Richards, David Adams**

This is mainly the story of an alcoholic and violent, but occasionally heroic man, who inhabits the Miramichi community in rural New Brunswick.

*For Those Who Hunt the Wounded Dawn*

When convicted murderer Jerry Bines, is released from jail, rumours and fears multiply as he heads home to his wife and seriously ill son. Can a man who has lived outside the law turn his back on the past and rejoin his community?

*Mercy Among the Children*

Set in the backwaters of the Miramichi, this is an almost mythic story of poverty and survival, and of how the sins (actual or perceived) of the father are visited upon the son. The father is Sydney Henderson, who as a young man lifts himself from poverty and alcoholism through work and reading, and who makes a pact with God to harm no man. This pact results in the harrowing persecution of Sydney and his family by the townspeople. It is also the story of the town itself and its people, a rich tableau of fully realized characters, any one of them worth a novel in themselves.

*River of the Brokenhearted*

Although ostracized by her maritime community and often the victim of double-dealing and overt violence, Janie McCleary becomes a successful entrepreneur when her son Miles, bullied and bruised, retreats into alcoholism, it falls to her fiery but brilliant granddaughter Ginger to continue the family legacy.

Also *The Friends of Meagre Fortune*

*Barney's Version*

**Richler, Mordecai**

With typical wit, compassion and insight, Richler has brought Barney Panofsky to life. His story of aging, losing control and confronting one's own mortality is a triumph of the human spirit that is determined to leave its own "version" of a life lived completely.

*Funny Boy*

**Selvadurai, Shyam**

This novel traces a boy's passage to adolescence and maturity against the backdrop of growing unrest in Sri Lanka in the 1980s. Told through six connected stories, Arjie Chlevaratnam's bittersweet journey from the simplicity of childhood, to the shaded unjust world of adulthood, is peopled with a delightful and eccentric cast of characters.

*Cinnamon Gardens*

During a period when the power of colonial rule was shifting (1920s), this story of intertwined lives vividly portrays the gracious world of Sri Lanka among the upper classes of Cinnamon Gardens, a wealthy suburb of Colombo, Ceylon. The rigid expectations of class, culture and family, as well as the power of love and conflicting passions are themes developed through the lives of a varied cast of the three central characters.

*The Stone Diaries*

**Shields, Carol**

Daisy Goodwill, beginning life in the Canadian Prairies and ending in a Florida retirement home, drifts through the chapters of childhood, marriage, widowhood, remarriage, motherhood, and old age, bewildered by her inability to understand her own role in life.

*Small Ceremonies*

Judith Gill, a well-respected biographer, is frustrated by her attempts to write a work of fiction. Through unique circumstances, she is able to "borrow" another writer's idea only to find herself "ripped off" by her writing tutor.

*Larry's Party*

Larry is an average Canadian who drifts through the first twenty-five years of his life, choosing a career in flower arranging when the local community college sends him the wrong brochure. He continues to drift obliviously until, on a honeymoon trip to England, he visits an elaborate maze and finds his ultimate calling. Shields has written the story of an ordinary man buffeted by the confusion and anxiety that surrounds the male identity in the last years of the twentieth century.

*Unless*

Reta Winters, a successful author, must cope with the loss of her eldest daughter who has inexplicably decided to live on the street and is wearing around her neck a hand-written sign which reads: "Goodness." Reta must tackle the mystery of this message and discover what has broken Nora and what can bring her back into the safety of her home.

*Teaching Pigs to Sing*

**Cordelia Strube**

Rita wants to pop her six-year-old son Max in a baggie with a Ziploc top—so she can preserve his innocence and trust, so she won't have to watch him lose faith in the world. Everywhere she looks, she sees chaos. She lives in a world of urban decay and she lives on the edge of urban normalcy in a disintegrating family: a mother suffering from a debilitating illness; a sister with a failing marriage; a brother enamoured of a God omnipresent in his schizoid mind; and a father wrapped in lottery fever. Will she find resilience and a glimmer of hope?

*Hui Gui: A Chinese Story*

**Sze, Elsie**

This is an epic novel of twentieth century China from the war-torn country of the thirties and forties, to refugees leaving the mainland for Hong Kong following the Communist takeover in 1949, to the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997, this is a mesmerizing tale of homecoming and it extols the triumph of the spirit over inevitabilities of the human predicament.

*A Complicated Kindness*

**Toews, Miriam**

Set in a Mennonite community in Western Canada, Toews traces the feelings of abandonment, betrayal, and rebellion of 17 year old Nomie. Her mother and older sister have disappeared and Nomie struggles with her depressed father, her fundamentalist uncle, her repressive teachers, and her evangelical faith

*The Flying Troutmans*

*The Flying Troutmans* is told from the perspective of a woman who returns from Paris to Winnipeg to assume care of her hospitalized sister's two children. Aunt Hattie leads nephew Logan, 15, and niece Thebes, 11, on a motel-hopping search for their estranged father that eventually lands the trio in California.

*Away*

**Urquhart, Jane**

This mystical novel centres around the beautiful daughter in a family in famine-struck Ireland. There are wonderful descriptions of characters and settings, as the family makes the arduous voyage to the new world, which is Canada, in order to make a new life. This novel contains twists and turns which must remain untold and be left for the reader to uncover.

*The Underpainter*

Less lyrical than her other novels, Urquhart explains the memories of Austin Fraser, an American painter, now in his later years. Spanning decades, the setting moves from upstate new

York to the northern shores of two Great Lakes, from France in World War I, to New York City in the '20s and '30s.

Also the *Whirlpool*, *Changin Heaven*, and *The Stone Carvers*.

*The Englishman's Boy*

**Vanderhaeghe, Guy**

This highly acclaimed novel links together Hollywood in the 1920s and one of the bloodiest and most brutal events in the nineteenth-century Canadian West – The Cypress Hills Massacre. Filled with visionaries, celebrities and dreamers, the novel has at its centre the haunting story of a young drifter- “the Englishman’s boy.”

Also, *The Last Crossing*.

*The Book of Secrets*

**Vassanji, M.G.**

Set in the Asian community of East Africa, this is a novel of generations in which the stories from a diary of a British Colonial administrator connect the past (1913) with the present (1988).

*The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*

This novel traces the conflicting loyalties of an East Indian immigrant, who must find his place in Kenya, a land of violent upheavals and confusing loyalties. His life in Africa spans the optimism of the fifties and sixties and the corruption and repression of the seventies and the eighties.

*The Assassin's Song*

Karsan Dargawalla, heir to the lordship of the shrine of th medieval sufi, defies his father and leaves India for Harvard University. His new existence in America is so compelling that he abdicates his successorship to the ancient throne and becomes a professor in British Columbia. However his heritage haunts him and after tragedy strikes, both in Canada and Pirbaag, he is drawn back across thirty years of the separation and silence to discover what is left for him in India.

*Red China Blues*

**Wong, Jan**

Jan Wong, a Canadian of Chinese descent, went to China as a starry-eyed Maoist in 1972 at the height of the Cultural Revolution. A true believer—and one of only two Westerners permitted to enrol at Beijing University—she renounced rock and roll, hauled pig manure, and turned in fellow student who sought her help in getting to the United States. Wong reveals long-hidden dimensions of China, and comes to terms with the legacy of her ancestral homeland.

*The Age of Longing*

**Wright, Richard**



A fifty year old failure, recovering from his first heart attack, spends a few summer weeks at his late mother's home to tidy up her affairs. He ends up reconstructing his parents' lives, putting together a beautiful story of southern Ontario fifty years ago.

*Clara Callan*

Two sisters, Clara and Nora, spring vividly to life as they share their dreams, their romantic dilemmas, and their hopes for the future. Set against a richly detailed portrait of the 1930s, when people found escape from hard times through radio and the movies, and when the growing threat of fascism in Europe was a constant worry, violence, deception and loss are never far away as Clara and Nora journey from innocence to experience.