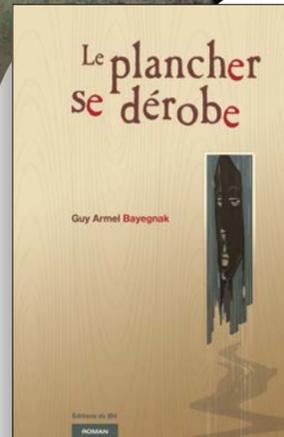


## Stories of Mixing Cultures



### **Le plancher se dérobe** Guy Armel Bayegnak

Awa, lawyer by training and a recent immigrant to Edmonton, is determined to rebuild her life in order to help her family in Cameroon. But she soon realizes that belonging in this new environment is not a matter of course. Confronted with values that are very different from her own, she learns as much about herself as she does about her new country.

*No sooner had Awa uttered this response than she regretted it. The memory of the crèche came back to her. She had to be discreet about her plans and not draw attention to herself. All she wanted was a peaceful life. What good was arousing pointless animosity? But it was too late. The word had been spoken. Heather had caught it. (p. 27)*

#### Highlights:

- Illustrates for readers the hopes and uncertainties of a likeable immigrant;
- Awa's search for identity is combined with reflections about religious practice as a vehicle for integration;
- *Le plancher se dérobe*, the second novel by this Cameroonian author, was a finalist for the Radio-Canada Readers' Choice Award.

Éditions du Blé, novel, 288 pages, 2012.  
978-2-92367-359-2  
Also available in digital format.



### **Mots et marées** by Carlos Taveira

Canada's first postman, Pedro Da Silva, was also the actual progenitor of a good part of the Portuguese community. *Mots et marées* tells the story of his life with his spirited wife in the society of early Quebec City. Part historical reconstruction, part work of imagination, the novel reveals the existence of a forgotten community while presenting the major events and players of early Canadian history.

Éditions L'Interligne, historical novel, 560 pages, 2014. 978-2-89699-392-5  
Also available in digital format.

#### Further Reading

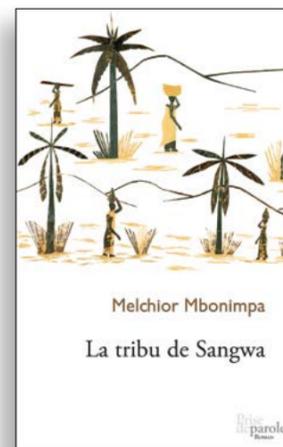
### **La tribu de Sangwa** Melchior Mbonimpa

Zamba immigrated to Canada, leaving behind a soon-to-be orphaned child who would be raised by Sangwa, his late lover's father. In Vancouver, Zamba meets Mireille and together they create a new family. In time, a humanitarian project would be a testimonial to the solidarity of the clan, now firmly established on the two continents.

*On that day, in a long confession, Zamba told his son the story of how he became a refugee, how he met Assia and why he was not there for his birth. He asked forgiveness from the boy for not managing to bring him to Canada before his mother, tired of waiting, agreed to a marriage of convenience with Amissi. (p. 42)*

#### Highlights:

- In this book, Melchior Mbonimpa continues with one of his favourite themes, the blending of cultures;
- The novel builds a bridge over the Atlantic, reconciling the memory of African roots with contemporary Canadian realities.



Éditions Prise de parole,  
novel, 272 pages, 2012.  
978-2-89423-267-5  
Also available in digital format.

RECF



In 2011, almost 7 million Canadians or 20% of the population reported that they were foreign-born<sup>1</sup>, the highest proportion among all the G8 countries. Indeed, Canada has long had a reputation for welcoming immigrants.

The first immigrants were American Loyalists who remained faithful to the British crown. Tens of thousands fled the oppression of the American Revolution at the end of the 18th century, among them approximately three thousand slaves and free Blacks. They were followed by Europeans who were recruited to clear land in the Prairies and the North, or who sought asylum in Canada after being persecuted in their own countries. On the West Coast, Asian immigrants were at first welcomed with open arms to work on the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, then heavily taxed from 1885 on and subsequently refused entry, a situation which persisted until 1947.

Although nowadays refugees represent a significant proportion of new arrivals, these are for the most part economic immigrants, selected for their skills and their ability to contribute to the Canadian economy, or people wanting to join their families who already live here. Drawn mainly to the big cities – Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver –, they are nevertheless increasingly settling in the Prairies and the Maritime provinces.

# The Many Faces of Canada

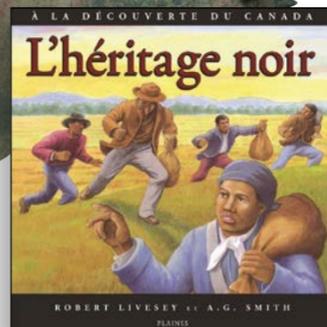
Since today's Canada was built on a mixture of cultures, it is important to preserve and share the stories of these immigrants. Driven by the hope for a better life, their work conveys a modern and unique vision of a country with many faces.

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada's *National Household Survey*.

## Our Books, Your History

Presented by the Regroupement des éditeurs canadiens-français (RECF), the project "Our Books, Your History" showcases a catalogue of books reflecting the original voices of French-Canadian authors. Works by these authors touch on all periods of Canada's history, from the earliest settlements to the World Wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and take many forms, from children's picture books to documentary volumes and scholarly anthologies.

## A Living Legacy



Éditions des Plaines, illustrated book, 96 pages, 2012.  
978-2-89611-245-6  
Ages 14 and up  
Also available in digital format.

### **Black Heritage** Robert Livesey and A. G. Smith

It is estimated that more than 60 million Africans were torn from their families, their culture and their religion to be sold as slaves. Victims of prejudice and violence, they had to fight for their rights with determination and courage. *Black Heritage* presents a host of strong individuals who have contributed to shaping Canada's history and culture.

*Stephen Blucke, born in Barbados to a Black mother and a white father, had commanded a fighting unit in New Jersey. He became the leader of the Black community and the largest landowner in Birchtown. His land grant was 500 hectares. His wife, Margaret, had bought her own freedom in New York at age 14, and later the freedom of a girl, Isabella Gibbons. (p. 15)*

#### Highlights:

- Fully illustrated, the book includes activities and an index;
- The structure of this history book facilitates understanding and learning, making it an excellent support tool;
- Presents profiles of many inspiring historical and contemporary Black Canadians.

#### Further Reading

##### *Toronto s'écrit : la Ville Reine dans notre littérature* by Paul-François Sylvestre

What does Toronto look like in the minds of Franco-Ontarian authors? This is what *Toronto s'écrit : la Ville Reine dans notre littérature* sets out to discover. The essay begins by presenting a history of the Queen City, and then hands it over to sixty authors who are from Toronto or who have lived in Canada's most multicultural city.

Éditions du GREF, essay, 204 pages, 2007. 978-1-89701-827-9

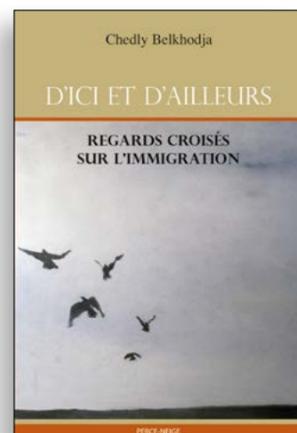
### **D'ici et d'ailleurs : Regards croisés sur l'immigration** Chedly Belkhodja

We often hear about migration flowing towards the world's major cities, but what about the less populated regions and Canada's smaller provinces in particular? In this essay, Chedly Belkhodja alternates between research conducted over roughly ten years and personal observations, along the way covering the development of his identity as an Acadian and a second generation immigrant.

*In an era where governments talk about the need to rely on immigration, [...] as [if it] could become an instant solution for economic and social development, it is important to better understand the way in which immigration has found its way into the Acadian project, including into the discourse of many players in New Brunswick's Acadian society. (p. 11)*

#### Highlights:

- The meticulously researched essay is written in a tone that leaves behind the restrictions of academic style;
- Explores the phenomenon of immigration to smaller communities;
- Combines personal experiences with the results of recent research in order to cover multiple aspects of the issue.



Éditions Perce-Neige, essay, 164 pages, 2011.  
978-2-92299-298-4

## Multi-Layered Works



Éditions David, novel, 264 pages, 2015.  
978-2-89597-454-3  
Also available in digital format.

### **Du pain et du jasmin** Monia Mazigh

At the heart of this moving novel are the intertwined stories of Nadia, who left her native Tunisia for Canada during the bread riots, and Lila, who discovered Tunis during the Jasmine Revolution. Thirty years apart, mother and daughter embrace their destiny as Arab women in a changing Muslim society.

*With an uncustomary speed that surprised me, I stuffed my notebooks into my bag and tried as best I could to weave through the crowd of students who were trying to escape. My heart beat wildly. I was gripped by fear. I felt my world, normally so well organized, suddenly falling apart like tumbling blocks. I kept asking myself what was going on. (p. 16)*

#### Highlights:

- The action closely follows actual events in the two revolutions;
- Alternating between the two stories creates a lively pace;
- A human rights advocate, the author is also a Canadian political and media personality.



##### *Étranges retrouvailles à la rivière Churchill* by Paskapoo

To shake herself out of her torpor after a difficult break-up, Claire finds herself drawn to the Saskatchewan prairies in search of an ancestor she has never met. After the Second World War, the older woman had fled her village in the Savoy region of France where she grew up, leaving no trace or explanation. What should have been a family reunion would become a journey of initiation for the two women that fate had brought to the shores of the Churchill River.

Éditions de la nouvelle plume, novel, 163 pages, 2011. 978-2-92138-573-2

### **Filleul** Hélène Koscielniak

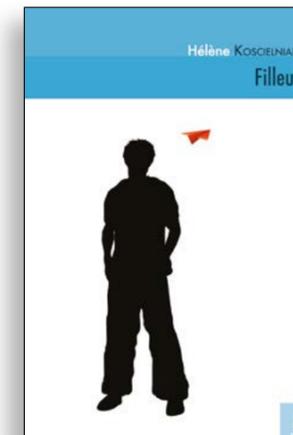
In *Filleul*, the follow up to *Marraine*, we meet Jo'no, a teenager whose life has so far been divided between Haiti and the Dominican Republic, and Normande, who welcomes him to Kapuskasing. Despite the splendours of his adopted country, Jo'no discovers that injustice and racism wreak havoc when he develops a friendship with an Aboriginal young man. Between Port-au-Prince and Northern Ontario, this young man will prove that mutual aid and solidarity are universal qualities.

*Her friend gradually became accustomed to his new environment. For her part, she won him over slowly but surely. In the course of their daily encounters, this quiet boy with his strange ways talked to her about his country and his family, and told her how and why he came to Kapuskasing. In the midst of these disclosures, Jo'no impressed her by passionately reciting a long poem about the snow that he loved so much. (p. 152)*

#### Highlights:

- The author draws her multi-dimensional characters with sensitivity and intelligence;
- The novel explores the delicate subject of sponsoring children and their integration into small communities;
- The first volume, *Marraine*, was awarded the Prix de littérature éclairée du Nord in 2009.

#### Further Reading



Éditions L'Interligne, novel, 368 pages, 2012.  
978-2-89699-356-7  
Also available in digital format.

## Where to find the books

All books by our member publishers are available online at [avoslivres.ca](http://avoslivres.ca). All titles are available in paper editions, and most are available in digital format as well.



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