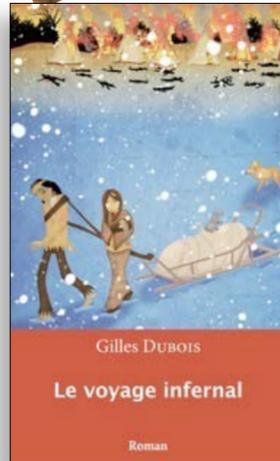


Native Myths and Legends

Le voyage infernal Gilles Dubois



Éditions L'Interligne,
teen fiction, 272 pages,
2011. 978-2-92327-490-4

On December 29, 1890, the U.S. cavalry massacred Indians at Wounded Knee in South Dakota. A survivor of this slaughter, a 17 year old Indian named Hokshenah, befriends Naha-Ichon, a Cheyenne, and Tobé Tarouhilé, a former slave. Together, they set off towards northern Canada. Their path will be strewn with both pitfalls and fortunate encounters that will lead them to freedom.

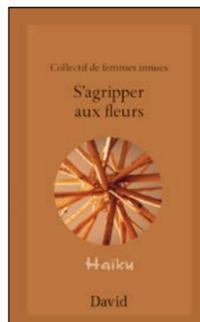
As soon as the soldiers disappeared behind the frost-covered mountain, Hokshenah left his hiding place and returned to the devastated camp. He wandered aimlessly, unable to turn his back permanently on what had been his community. But what good is clinging to the past. There is no life left here. The soldiers even slaughtered the dogs. (p. 43)

Highlights:

- In this novel, winter and nature are real characters that create an atmosphere of mysticism;
- Told from the perspective of a young Indian devastated by the loss of his people, the book contrasts innocence with human stupidity;
- Gilles Dubois provides a lesson in real history by showing the side of the vanquished, who are rarely given the chance to tell their story.

Further Reading

S'agripper aux fleurs. Haïkus. Multiple authors, edited and prefaced by Francine Chicoine



Louve Mathieu, Louise Canapé and Jeanne d'Arc Vollant describe life on the reserve using the haiku form. After a writing camp that was held in Baie-Comeau, Quebec, Francine Chicoine, who initiated the project, decided to offer these women the opportunity to move from the oral to the written word. These three Innu women attest to Aboriginal identity and convey the urgency of reconnecting with their roots.

Éditions David, poetry, 114 pages, 2012. 978-2-89597-309-6
Also available in digital format.

Légendes autochtones by Marc Scott

In this collection, talented storyteller Marc Scott has gathered 44 Aboriginal legends, encompassing the different stories of Canada's Indigenous peoples. Through emblematic figures – such as the White Fairy or the Wendigo – the author builds bridges between these peoples who, from East to West and up to the Far North, share certain myths. Included at the end of the book are references and a list of the Aboriginal nations of Canada.

Éditions du Chardon Bleu, stories, 336 pages, 2011. 978-2-92395-301-4
Also available in digital format.



RECF



For more than a hundred and fifty years, from 1830 to 1996, thousands of children from Aboriginal communities were forcibly uprooted from their families and sent to residential schools, of which there were 130 in Canada. The obligation to attend these institutions stemmed from a government policy that aimed to assimilate the younger generations of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit into the colonizing culture.

The combined actions of the federal government and the Church decimated the native peoples and enabled them to take control of the Canadian territory and exploit its riches from coast to coast. This "cultural genocide", to borrow the words of former Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin, has permanently marked the First Nations. The loss of identity caused by this enforced education and the appropriation of their ancestral lands left them helpless in the face of adversity, obliging them to reinvent themselves and rebuild their communities.

The ban against speaking their languages and practicing their beliefs created a void in their heritage. Fortunately, this orality-based culture has gradually been recorded on paper, ensuring that an ancient knowledge of great richness may be passed on to future generations. From a violent past there has emerged an Aboriginal literature with a strong and unwavering voice.

Aboriginal Perspectives

Today, many Aboriginal activists are working to bring to light these tragic episodes in Canada's history and the inequalities that still persist, and demanding reparations and justice. Discover books that tell the stories of victims of the residential schools with sensitivity, as well as books that enable us all to celebrate Aboriginal cultures.



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 20th century, and take many forms, from children's picture books to documentary volumes and scholarly anthologies.

The Duty to Remember



Éditions des Plaines, novel, 269 pages, 2015. 978-2-89611-421-4

Aussi longtemps que les rivières couleront (As Long as the Rivers Flow)

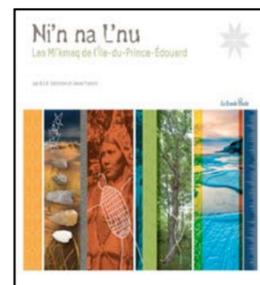
James Bartleman, translated from the English by Diane Lavoie

Taken away from her family at the age of six and brought to an Indian residential school, Martha would stay there for ten years – ten years of suffering and abuse. The length of time and the forced acculturation leave Martha a lost woman. She feels distanced from her culture and frightened by the world of the whites. She tries to find a new balance and starts a family, but will she be able to overcome the demons of the past?

Locked in a nightmare, Martha was a child again at the Indian residential school on James Bay where she had lived for ten years, from the age of six to sixteen. The priest who had summoned her to his office for “special spiritual instruction” was sexually assaulting her. (p. 9)

Highlights:

- Using a straightforward writing style, the author lifts the veil on the abuses committed in residential schools;
- The novel addresses the problems that resulted from this suffering: youth suicide, alcoholism and difficulty with social interactions;
- It is also a novel of hope for reconciliation through human solidarity.



Ni'n na L'nu. Les Mi'kmaq de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard Édouard (The Mi'kmaq of Prince Edward Island) by A. J. B. Johnston and Jesse Francis

This educational volume brings together many period photographs of the Mi'kmaq of Prince Edward Island, as well as crafts objects. The authors explain how archaeological excavations and ancient stories have made it possible to reconstruct a heritage that is in danger of disappearing. Punctuated by poetry and legends, this book presents the still-living traditions that define the unique and vibrant culture of the Mi'kmaq on Epekwitk.

Éditions La Grande Marée, essay, 92 pages, 2014. 978-2-34972-315-4
Also available in digital format.

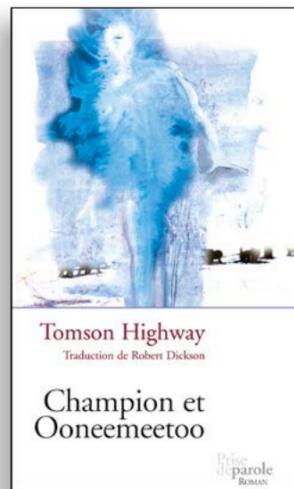
Champion et Ooneemeetoo (Kiss of the Fur Queen) Tomson Highway, translated from the English by Robert Dickson

At six years old, Champion and Ooneemeetoo Okimasis are torn from their family and placed in a residential school in southern Manitoba. These two young Cree endure the indoctrination and abuses of a religious education that would destroy their beliefs. But thanks to the forces of Nature that watch over them, they manage to find their way. In dance and music, the two brothers discover their own place in the world.

Uniformly garbed in sky-blue denim shirts and navy denim coveralls, the boys marched out into a long, white passageway that smelled of metal and Javex – everything here smelled of metal and Javex – where lines of Indian girl strangers were marching in the opposite direction. (p. 73)

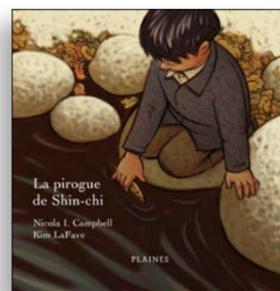
Highlights:

- The author's vivid writing takes us on a journey into a story of spellbinding magical realism;
- The author tackles the delicate subject of residential schools with great sensitivity, and without negativity;
- This is an authentic and poetic work in which the world of the arts is offered as a way out.



Éditions Prise de parole, novel, 362 pages, 2004. 978-2-89423-414-3
Also available in digital format.

Accounts That Reflect Reality



Éditions des Plaines, children's book, 40 pages, 2010. 978-2-89611-070-4. Ages 4 and up

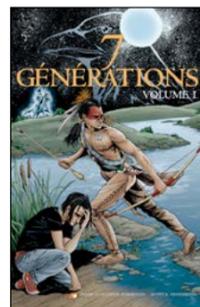
La pirogue de Shin-chi (Shin-chi's Canoe) Nicola I. Campbell, illustrations by Kim LaFave

Following her successful first book, Shi-shi-etko, Nicola I. Campbell gives us Shin-chi's Canoe. Shi-shi-etko's younger brother, Shin-chi, leaves for residential school for the first time. For one year, the two children will not see their family, will not be able to speak to each other and will have to be called by strange English names. Fortunately, Shin-chi carefully guards the little canoe that his father carved. It gives him the strength to wait until the sockeye salmon swim up the river.

Shin-Chi could not help himself. He looked at everything. He listened to each crystal snowflake that danced down from the sky and fell on his face. He breathed the cool breath of winter, until the land was covered in a blanket of fresh snow. (p. 26)

Highlights:

- The story is based on interviews that the author conducted with members of her family and elders who survived residential schools;
- The illustrator was inspired by archival photographs to create a nuanced atmosphere;
- A poetic and realistic story, the book is written from the perspective of a child who is struggling to maintain his identity.



7 Générations: Volume 1 by David Alexander Robertson and Scott B. Henderson

Young Eldwin does not know how to live with the past that haunts him. To help him, his mother honours the memory of their ancestors, which spans three centuries and seven generations. From traditional warrior customs to diseases introduced by the colonists, this is the first volume in a series of two journeys between the contemporary reality of an Aboriginal adolescent and the stories of his ancestors.

Éditions des Plaines, graphic novel, 72 pages, 2013. 978-2-89611-392-7. Ages 13 and up
Also available in digital format.

Further Reading

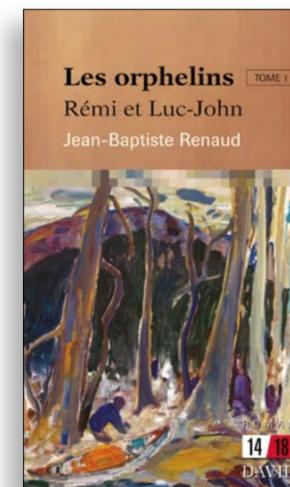
Les orphelins. Rémi et Luc-John Jean-Baptiste Renaud

Since the death of his parents, Rémi has lived with an alcoholic uncle who makes life hard for him. Left on his own, the young boy runs away from that life of hardship. On his way, he meets Luc-John, a young Native American boy who has just escaped from a residential school. Together they try to survive in the woods with the help of a mysterious trapper named Conrad. Rémi now finds himself facing a new reality.

His name was Luc-John Niquay, and he was from the Grey River valley. He never told me the name of his tribe. Maybe he thought he was protecting himself by not talking about it. And yet, no one was less capable of hiding his real nature, he was so passionate and enthusiastic. Through him, I discovered a whole world of mystery and legends. (p. 69)

Highlights:

- Inspired by a true story, this historical novel will teach teenagers about Aboriginal realities in the 1930s;
- This book won the 2015 Le Droit literary award in the youth category;
- Rémi's adventures continue in Volume 2: *Les orphelins. Rémi à la guerre.*



Éditions David, teen fiction, 246 pages, 2014. 978-2-89597-436-9. Ages 14 to 18
Also available in digital format.

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