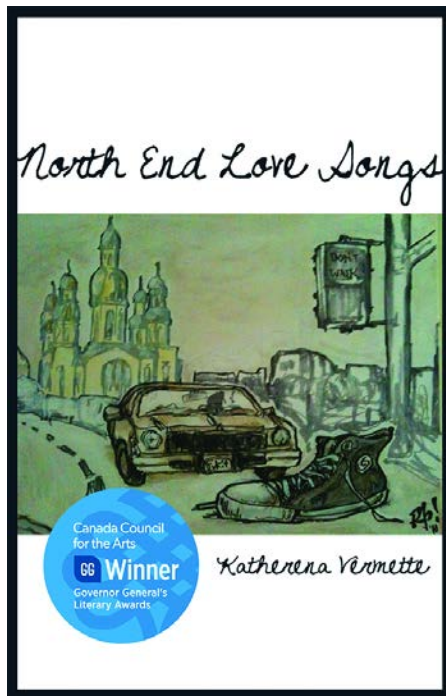




**J. GORDON SHILLINGFORD**  
P U B L I S H I N G I N C

BOOKS THAT ENTERTAIN, EDUCATE, AND INSPIRE

## ESSENTIAL READING



*"Vermette's love songs are unconventional and imminent, an examination and a celebration of family and community in all weathers, the beautiful as well as the less clement conditions. This collection is a very moving tribute, to the girls and the women, the boys and the men, and the loving trouble that has forever transpired between us." — Joanne Arnott*

*"From a mixed-blood Metis woman with Mennonite roots, Kate weaves a story that winds its way through the north end (Nor-tend) of Winnipeg. It's a story of death, birth, survival, beauty and ugliness; through it all there are glimmers of hope, strength, and a will to survive whatever this city throws at you." — Duncan Mercredi*

### **Winner of the Governor General's Literary Award for Poetry**

In Katherena Vermette's [North End Love Songs](#), young girls share secrets, movies, cigarettes, Big Gulps, and stories of love—and a young mother full of both maternal trepidation and joy watches her small daughters as they play in the park. Generally seen as poor and crime-ridden, the North End Vermette shows us is a neighbourhood of colourful birds, stately elms, and always wily rivers. But it is also where a brother's disappearance is trivialized by local media and police because he is young and Aboriginal.

See More

## THE INTERVIEW

[Scott Nolan](#) is a songwriter, poet, multi-instrumentalist from Winnipeg, Manitoba Treaty One territory, with nine albums to his credit. His songs have been recorded by Hayes Carll, Mary Gauthier, Watermelon Slim, and Corin Raymond, among others. After 10 years on the road, he decided to quit touring, and quickly became a sought-after producer. [Moon Was a Feather](#), Nolan's first foray into poetry, maintains his lyric storytelling sensibility as he reflects on his own difficult past and sketches the people and places in his neighbourhood.



**Scott, you are well known as a singer-songwriter who writes powerful lyrics, but with [Moon Was a Feather](#), you moved into poetry. Can you tell us about how writing poetry is different from writing song lyrics?**

Half a dozen years ago when I quit smoking, I started walking long distances every day. And I didn't necessarily have a background in poetry, but the very first day I set out to do these big long walks, what wound up to be little pieces of a poem started floating around in my head as I walked. It was like a response to trauma, so to speak, as I was trying to overcome this addiction. And what's quite different, in the obvious sense to me between the two, is that with lyrics I work on refining them, considering metre and rhyme pattern... whereas with poetry, at least in my experience, it's almost like snapping a photo—being in the right place at the right moment — so I really try not to fool with them. I respect the poems as they arrive, whereas with the songs I refine them to fit my needs.

**You've spent a lot of time touring throughout North America. In both your poetry and in your songs, you evoke a strong sense of place—whether that is a windy Winnipeg neighbourhood, a wheat field under the stars, or an Oklahoma sunset. Why do you choose to live in Winnipeg? What does Winnipeg give you that you can't find anywhere else?**

You know, I joke that in the early parts of my career I'd kind of defend Winnipeg during my travels, and toward the latter part of my career I found I bragged about it constantly. The thing it has for me in particular, in terms of an artists' community, is it's a pretty unpretentious town, quite frankly, and in all the various mediums of art there are such great people—from a Guy Maddin to a Catherine Hunter to a John Samson—that it's hard to get too big for your britches here. We're kind of blue-collar that way and I think it's good for the art; I think it's good for the artists themselves. And it's also a strange, magical place. There are times in the worst moments of winter where it really feels like you're on the moon. I've

always had a theory that you can only be so big of a fish in this town. There are limits to the celebrity-type stuff, which I like. I find that unique and charming. No matter how much money or comfort or privilege you might have, mosquitoes are still a nuisance to you, you still get cold. I like that about it. It's a bit of an equalizer in that sense.

**In your musical career, you have engaged in a number of very fruitful collaborations. You've performed with Glen Buhr, a classically trained musician, you've written songs with superstars like Hayes Carll and Mary Gauthier, you've produced albums for artists such as William Prince, Stephen Fearing, Little Miss Higgins, and Watermelon Slim. Is poetry a more solitary pursuit? Or have you brought collaborative ideas to your poetry as well?**

...

[Read the Full Interview](#)

## CLASS NOTES

*Want to share your story about how you use JGS titles in your classes? Let us know. We'd love to talk to you!*



This month we asked Professor [Catherine Hunter](#) — who is an award-winning poet and novelist in her own right — to talk to us about how she uses poetry in her teaching.

Canadian poetry books are very important in my classroom. I have used them in an Honours seminar on Canadian poetry, in creative writing classes, and in first-year English. Short, single-author collections by individual poets give students a stronger understanding of a poet's voice and vision than an anthology can. They more fully reveal the poet's voice and vision, and the larger body of work forms a context for the individual poems. We also study the structure of the book as a whole—how the poems are grouped into sections and why. Creative writing students are especially interested in the kind of work it takes to pull a collection together.

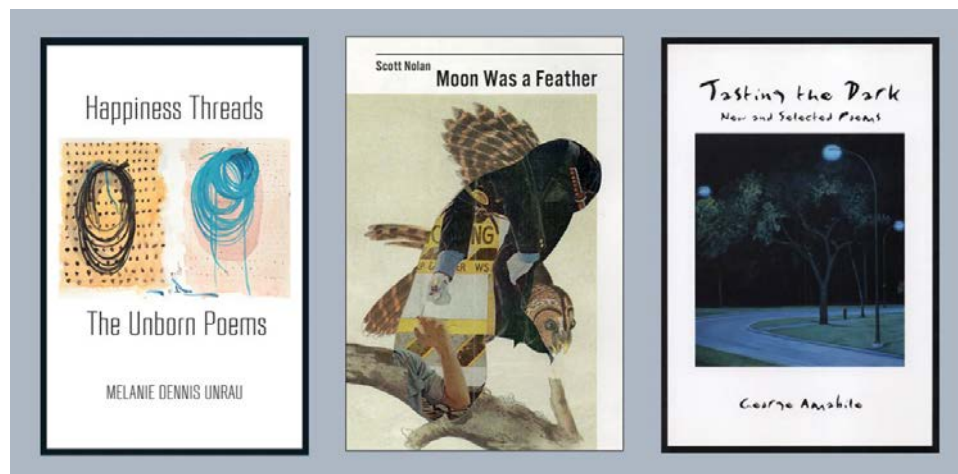
Exercises I have assigned include students reading individual poems of their choice to the class and discussing topics linked to the course level: use of imagery, tone of the poetic voice, social and historical significance, or line-breaks and other aspects of form.

I've been lucky to host some local poets who publish with The Muses' Company who have generously come into the classroom to read and answer student questions. For example, we have hosted Clarise Foster, who read from [The Flame Tree](#) and spoke to creative writing students about the writing and editing process. Katherena Vermette ([North End Love Songs](#)) was our UW Writer-in-Residence one year, and at one event, we followed a reading by Rosanna Deerchild ([this is a small northern town](#)), with a public panel discussion including students and faculty. Meeting the poets is a delight for students, especially the emerging writers in the class.

*Catherine Hunter is a professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Winnipeg.*

Many of our authors are available for classroom visits, in person or via Zoom. If there's an author you'd like to invite to your class, [contact us](#) for more information.

## APRIL IS POETRY MONTH



[See More](#)

## COMING ATTRACTIONS

• IN THEATRES •

***Stag and Doe*** by Mark Crawford

[Daytrippers Dinner Theatre](#), Bloomington, Minnesota, to June 9, 2022.

***The Runner*** by Christopher Morris

[Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre](#), March 30–April 16, 2022.

**Orphan Song** by Sean Dixon

[Tarragon Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, March 23–April 24, 2022.

**The Birds and the Bees** by Mark Crawford

[New Wolseley Theatre](#), Ipswich, UK, March 25–April 9, 2022.

**The Herd** by Kenneth T. Williams

[Citadel Theatre](#), Edmonton, AB, April 7–April 24, 2022.

**The Birds and the Bees** by Mark Crawford

[Norwich Theatre Playhouse](#), Norwich, UK, April 20–30, 2022.

**Dry Streak** by Leanne Minogue

[Odyssey Productions](#), Prince Albert, SK, April 23, 2022.

**The Birds and the Bees** by Mark Crawford

[Theatre Royal](#), Bury St. Edmunds, UK, May 3–7, 2022.

**The Herd** by Kenneth T. Williams

[Tarragon Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, May 11–June 12, 2022.

**The Great Shadow** by Alex Poch-Goldin

[4<sup>th</sup> Line Theatre](#), Millbrook, ON, June 28–July 23, 2022.

**Stag and Doe** by Mark Crawford

[Capitol Theatre](#), Port Hope, ON, July 7–30, 2022.

**Beyond the Sea** by Kristen Da Silva

[Festival Players of Prince Edward County](#), Bloomington, ON, August 24–September 4, 2022.

**The Waltz** by Marie Beath Badian

[Blyth Festival](#), Blyth, ON, August 11–27, 2022.

**The Ex-Boyfriend Yard Sale** by Haley McGee

[Soulpepper Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, October 18–November 6, 2022.

**The Waltz** by Marie Beath Badian

[Factory Theatre](#), Toronto, ON, October 22–November 13, 2022.

**New** by Pamela Sinha

[Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre](#), Winnipeg, MB, November 3–19, 2022.

**Let's Run Away** by Daniel MacIvor

[Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre](#), Winnipeg, MB, December 1–17, 2022.

• ONLINE •

**5 Short Films Inspired by the Five Senses** featuring "Taste" by Mark Crawford and Britta Johnson, and "All the Colours" by Marcia Johnson and Danika Loren, [Bad Hats Theatre](#), Online now.

**Deer Woman** by Tara Beagan, [Prairie Theatre Exchange](#), Winnipeg, MB, April 20–24, 2022.

• ON SCREEN •

**The Swearing Jar** by Kate Hewlett

Starring Adelaide Clemens, Douglas Smith, Patrick J. Adams, and Kathleen Turner, [coming Spring 2022](#).

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