

Salute to Myrna

As writers, I think that one of our goals is to achieve a kind of immortality. To me, having a book in print for 36 years is a kind of immortality. Indeed, to have authored nine books is quite notable – not to mention a productive journalism career spanning the major general interest and literary glossies in Canada. And to be called “One of Canada’s most intelligent and conscientious writers” by Books in Canada?! But that’s not enough for the person I salute.

Real lasting distinction lies in pioneering a new literary form, and she has done that. In a crowded literary pantheon, she has carved out space for a recognizable – although chameleon – literary form. She defined Creative Nonfiction, and sold that definition to vital cultural gatekeepers in Canada.

She’s raised provided exact inclusive language for important national juries as well as raising awareness at The Writers’ Union, which has tended to resist nonfiction – contributing her time, and winning over any opposition to her definition. Thanks to her persistence, more universities and Writer in Residence programs recognize CNF as a legitimate literary art.

But that’s not enough for her. No, that’s not enough. No, this person has to collaborate with a friend and call together a new organization too! A new organization bursting with Western pride and so much vigour that this Western group spun off a Toronto chapter!

Today we celebrate the tenth anniversary of that organization. No doubt this beautiful person will continue to innovate and inspire, to shape Canada, as her beloved North Saskatchewan valley has shaped her. Just for this morning though, let’s raise our juice glasses to CNFC’s long-serving former president, and celebrate all she has achieved personally and professionally, while advancing our very own craft, or subtle art.

Here’s to Myrna!

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