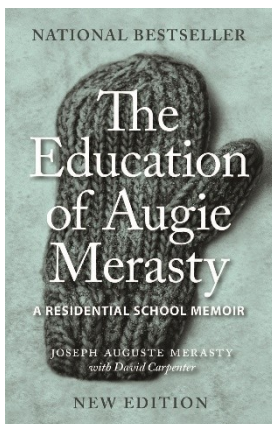


# Indigenous Book List - Adult

## Non-Fiction

1. Merasty, Augie  
*The Education of Augie Merasty*



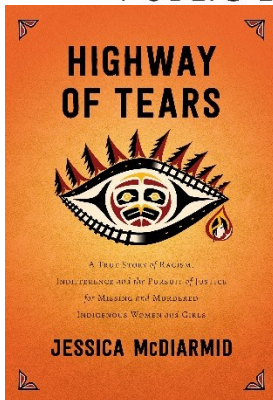
“A courageous and intimate memoir, *The Education of Augie Merasty* is the story of a child who faced the dark heart of humanity, let loose by the cruel policies of a bigoted nation.

A retired fisherman and trapper who sometimes lived rough on the streets, Augie Merasty was one of an estimated 150,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Metis children who were taken from their families and sent to government-funded, church-run schools, where they were subjected to a policy of aggressive assimilation.

As Augie recounts, these schools did more than attempt to mould children in the ways of white society. They were taught to be ashamed of their heritage and, as he experienced, often suffered physical and sexual abuse.

But even as he looks back on this painful part of his childhood, Merasty's sense of humour and warm voice shine through.”

2. McDiarmid, Jessica  
*Highway of Tears*

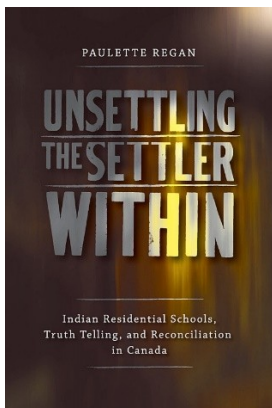


“For decades, Indigenous women and girls have gone missing or been found murdered along an isolated stretch of highway in northwestern British Columbia. The highway is known as the Highway of Tears, and it has come to symbolize a national crisis.

Journalist Jessica McDiarmid investigates the devastating effect these tragedies have had on the families of the victims and their communities, and how systemic racism and indifference have created a climate where Indigenous women and girls are over-policed, yet under-protected. Through interviews with those closest to the victims—mothers and fathers, siblings and friends—McDiarmid offers an intimate, first-hand account of their loss and relentless fight for justice. Examining the historically fraught social and cultural tensions between settlers and Indigenous peoples in the region, McDiarmid links these cases to others across Canada—now estimated to number up to 4,000—contextualizing them within a broader examination of the undervaluing of Indigenous lives in this country.

*Highway of Tears* is a powerful story about our ongoing failure to provide justice for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and a testament to their families and communities' unwavering determination to find it.”

3. Regan, Paulette  
*Unsettling the Settler Within*



“In 2008 the Canadian government apologized to the victims of the notorious Indian residential



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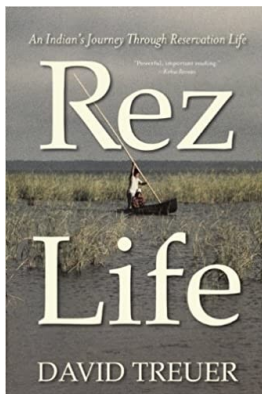
school system, and established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission whose goal was to mend the deep rifts between Aboriginal peoples and the settler society that engineered the system.

*Unsettling the Settler Within* argues that in order to truly participate in the transformative possibilities of reconciliation, non-Aboriginal Canadians must undergo their own process of decolonization. They must relinquish the persistent myth of themselves as peacemakers and acknowledge the destructive legacy of a society that has stubbornly ignored and devalued Indigenous experience. Today's truth and reconciliation processes must make space for an Indigenous historical counter-narrative in order to avoid perpetuating a colonial relationship between Aboriginal and settler peoples.

A compassionate call to action, this powerful book offers all Canadians -- both Indigenous and not -- a new way of approaching the critical task of healing the wounds left by the residential school system."

#### 4. Treuer, David

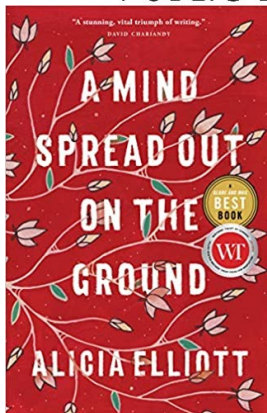
*Rez Life*



"A member of the Ojibwe of northern Minnesota, David Treuer grew up on Leech Lake Reservation, but was educated in mainstream America. Exploring crime and poverty, casinos and wealth, and the preservation of native language and culture, *Rez Life* is a strikingly original blend of history, memoir, and journalism, a must read for anyone interested in the Native American story. With authoritative research and reportage, he illuminates issues of sovereignty, treaty rights, and natural-resource conservation. He traces the policies that have disenfranchised and exploited Native Americans, exposing the tension that marks the historical relationship between the US government and the Native American population. Ultimately, through the eyes of students, teachers, government administrators, lawyers, and tribal court judges, he shows how casinos, tribal government, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs have transformed the landscape of modern Native American life."

#### 5. Elliott, Alicia

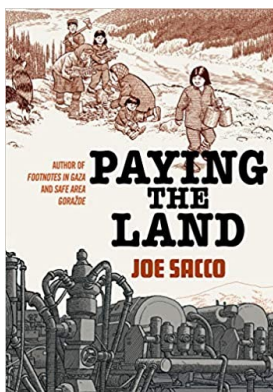
*A Mind Spread Out on the Ground*



“In an urgent and visceral work that asks essential questions about the treatment of Native people in North America while drawing on intimate details of her own life and experience with intergenerational trauma, Alicia Elliott offers indispensable insight into the ongoing legacy of colonialism. She engages with such wide-ranging topics as race, parenthood, love, mental illness, poverty, sexual assault, gentrification, writing and representation, and in the process makes connections both large and small between the past and present, the personal and political—from overcoming a years-long battle with head lice to the way Native writers are treated within the Canadian literary industry; her unplanned teenage pregnancy to the history of dark matter and how it relates to racism in the court system; her childhood diet of Kraft Dinner to how systemic oppression is directly linked to health problems in Native communities.

With deep consideration and searing prose, Elliott provides a candid look at our past, an illuminating portrait of our present and a powerful tool for a better future.”

6. Sacco, Joe  
*Paying the Land*



“The Dene have lived in the vast Mackenzie River Valley since time immemorial, by their account. To the Dene, the land owns them, not the other way around, and it is central to their livelihood and very way of being. But the subarctic Canadian Northwest Territories are home to valuable resources, including oil, gas, and diamonds. With mining came jobs and

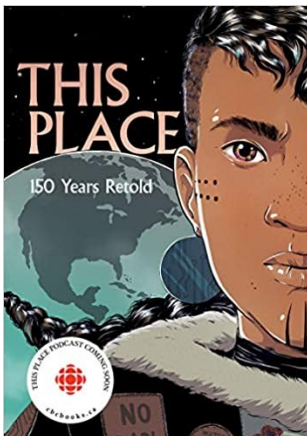
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investment, but also road-building, pipelines, and toxic waste, which scarred the landscape, and alcohol, drugs, and debt, which deformed a way of life.

In *Paying the Land*, Joe Sacco travels the frozen North to reveal a people in conflict over the costs and benefits of development. The mining boom is only the latest assault on indigenous culture: Sacco recounts the shattering impact of a residential school system that aimed to “remove the Indian from the child”; the destructive process that drove the Dene from the bush into settlements and turned them into wage laborers; the government land claims stacked against the Dene Nation; and their uphill efforts to revive a wounded culture.

Against a vast and gorgeous landscape that dwarfs all human scale, *Paying the Land* lends an ear to trappers and chiefs, activists and priests, to tell a sweeping story about money, dependency, loss, and culture—recounted in stunning visual detail by one of the greatest cartoonists alive.”

## 7. *This Place: 150 Years Retold*



“Explore the past 150 years through the eyes of Indigenous creators in this groundbreaking graphic novel anthology. Beautifully illustrated, these stories are an emotional and enlightening journey through Indigenous wonderworks, psychic battles, and time travel. See how Indigenous peoples have survived a post-apocalyptic world since Contact.”

## 8. Dove, Mourning *Coyote Stories*



“A powerful force and yet the butt of humor, the coyote figure runs through the folklore of many American Indian tribes. He can be held up as a “terrible example” of conduct, a model of what not to do, and yet admired for a careless, anarchistic energy that suggests unlimited possibilities. Mourning Dove, an Okanagan, knew him well from the legends handed down by her people. She preserved them for posterity in *Coyote Stories*, originally published in 1933.

Here is Coyote, the trickster, the selfish individualist, the imitator, the protean character who indifferently puts the finishing touches on a world soon to receive human beings. And here is Mole, his long-suffering wife, and all the other Animal People, including Fox, Chipmunk, Owl-Woman, Rattlesnake, Grizzly Bear, Porcupine, and Chickadee. Here it is revealed why Skunk’s tail is black and white, why Spider has such long legs, why Badger is so humble, and why Mosquito bites people. These entertaining, psychologically compelling stories will be welcomed by a wide spectrum of readers.”

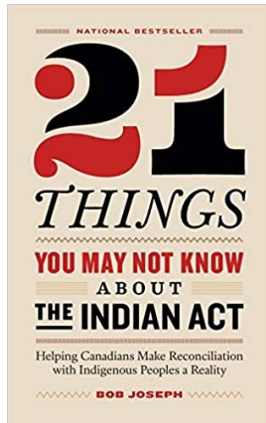
9. Koyozan, Shane  
*Inconvenient Skin*



“This collection of poems aims to unpack the history of colonialism in Canada so the nation can finally heal.”

10. Joseph, Bob

*21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act*

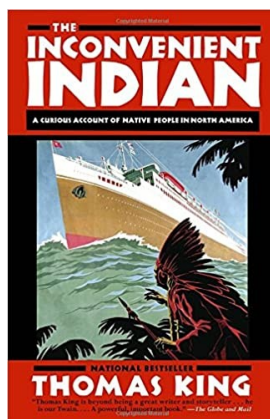


“Based on a viral article, *21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act* is the essential guide to understanding the legal document and its repercussion on generations of Indigenous Peoples, written by a leading cultural sensitivity trainer.

Since its creation in 1876, the Indian Act has shaped, controlled, and constrained the lives and opportunities of Indigenous Peoples, and is at the root of many enduring stereotypes. Bob Joseph's book comes at a key time in the reconciliation process, when awareness from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities is at a crescendo. Joseph explains how Indigenous Peoples can step out from under the Indian Act and return to self-government, self-determination, and self-reliance - and why doing so would result in a better country for every Canadian. He dissects the complex issues around truth and reconciliation, and clearly demonstrates why learning about the Indian Act's cruel, enduring legacy is essential for the country to move toward true reconciliation.”

11. King, Thomas

*The Inconvenient Indian*



“Rich with dark and light, pain and magic, *The Inconvenient Indian* distills the insights



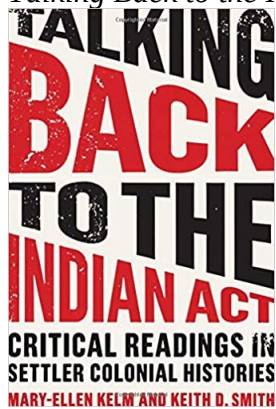
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gleaned from Thomas King's critical and personal meditation on what it means to be "Indian" in North America, weaving the curiously circular tale of the relationship between non-Natives and Natives in the centuries since the two first encountered each other. In the process, King refashions old stories about historical events and figures, takes a sideways look at film and pop culture, relates his own complex experiences with activism, and articulates a deep and revolutionary understanding of the cumulative effects of ever-shifting laws and treaties on Native peoples and lands."

12. Kelm, Mary-Ellen and Keith D. Smith

*Talking Back to the Indian Act*



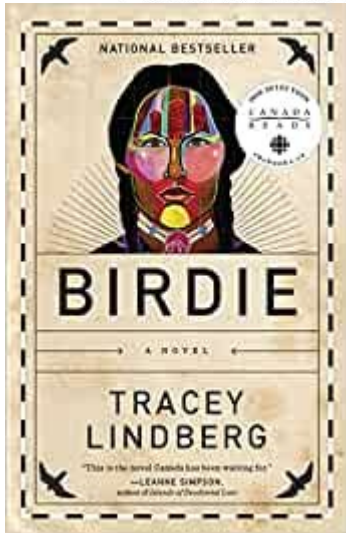
“*Talking Back to the Indian Act* is a comprehensive "how-to" guide for engaging with primary source documents. The intent of the book is to encourage readers to develop the skills necessary to converse with primary sources in more refined and profound ways. As a piece of legislation that is central to Canada’s relationship with Indigenous peoples and communities, and one that has undergone many amendments, the Indian Act is uniquely positioned to act as a vehicle for this kind of focused reading.

Through an analysis of thirty-five sources pertaining to the Indian Act—addressing governance, gender, enfranchisement, and land—the authors provide readers with a much better understanding of this pivotal piece of legislation, as well as insight into the dynamics involved in its creation and maintenance.”

## Fiction

1. Lindberg, Tracey  
*Birdie*



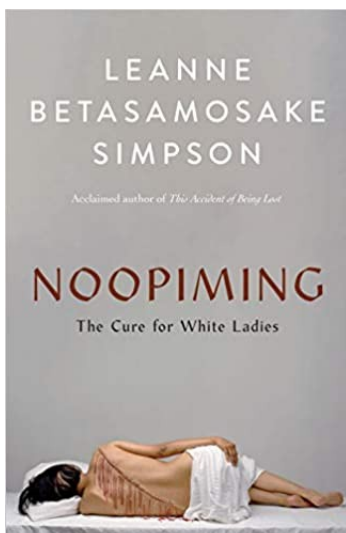


“Bernice Meetoos will not be broken.

A big, beautiful Cree woman with a dark secret in her past, Bernice (“Birdie”) has left her home in northern Alberta to travel to Gibsons, B.C. She is on something of a vision quest, looking for family, for home, for understanding. She is also driven by the leftover teenaged desire to meet Pat Johns--Jesse from *The Beachcombers*--because he is, as she says, a working, healthy Indian man. Birdie heads for Molly’s Reach to find answers, but they are not the ones she expected.

With the arrival in Gibsons of her Auntie Val and her cousin Skinny Freda, Birdie begins to draw from her dreams the lessons she was never fully taught in life. Informed by the lore and knowledge of Cree traditions, Birdie is a darkly comic and moving first novel about the universal experience of recovering from tragedy. At heart, it is the story of an extraordinary woman who travels to the deepest part of herself to find the strength to face the past and to build a new life.”

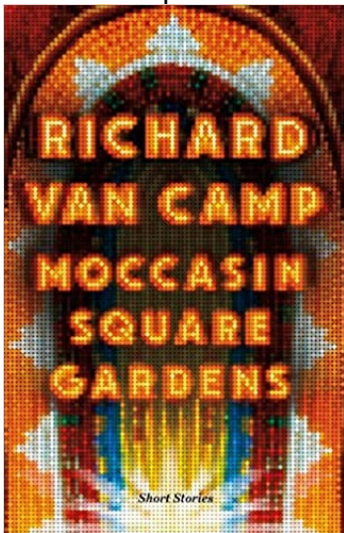
2. Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake  
*Noopiming*



“Mashkawaji (they/them) lies frozen in the ice, remembering a long-ago time of hopeless connection and now finding freedom and solace in isolated suspension. They introduce us to the seven main characters: Akiwenzii, the old man who represents the narrator’s will; Ninaatig, the maple tree who represents their lungs; Mindimooyenh, the old woman who represents their conscience; Sabe, the giant who represents their marrow; Adik, the caribou who represents their nervous system; Asin, the human who represents their eyes and ears; and Lucy, the human who represents their brain. Each attempts to commune with the unnatural urban-settler world, a world of SpongeBob Band-Aids, Ziploc baggies, Fjällräven Kånken backpacks, and coffee mugs emblazoned with institutional logos. And each searches out the natural world, only to discover those pockets that still exist are owned, contained, counted, and consumed. Cut off from nature, the characters are cut off from their natural selves.

*Noopiming* is Anishinaabemowin for “in the bush,” and the title is a response to English Canadian settler and author Susanna Moodie’s 1852 memoir *Roughing It in the Bush*. To read Simpson’s work is an act of decolonization, degentrification, and willful resistance to the perpetuation and dissemination of centuries-old colonial myth-making. It is a lived experience. It is a breaking open of the self to a world alive with people, animals, ancestors, and spirits, who are all busy with the daily labours of healing — healing not only themselves, but their individual pieces of the network, of the web that connects them all together. Enter and be changed.”

3. Van Camp, Richard  
*Moccasin Square Gardens*



“The characters of *Moccasin Square Gardens* inhabit Denendeh, the land of the people north of the sixtieth parallel. These stories are filled with in-laws, outlaws and common-laws. Get ready for illegal wrestling moves (“The Camel Clutch”), pinky promises, a doctored casino, extraterrestrials or “Sky People,” love, lust and prayers for peace.

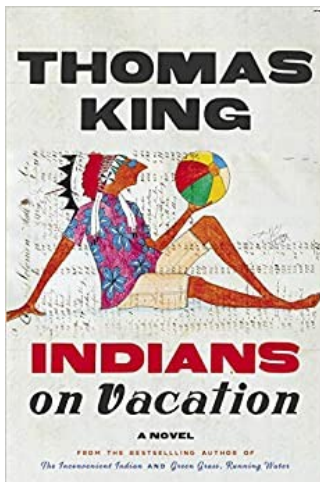
While this is Van Camp’s most hilarious short story collection, it’s also haunted by the lurking presence of the Wheetago, human-devouring monsters of legend that have returned due to global

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warming and the greed of humanity. The stories in *Moccasin Square Gardens* show that medicine power always comes with a price.

To counteract this darkness, Van Camp weaves a funny and loving portrayal of the Tłı̨chǫ Dene and other communities of the North, drawing from oral history techniques to perfectly capture the character and texture of everyday small-town life. “Moccasin Square Gardens” is the nickname of a dance hall in the town of Fort Smith that serves as a meeting place for a small but diverse community. In the same way, the collection functions as a meeting place for an assortment of characters, from shamans and time-travelling goddess warriors to pop-culture-obsessed pencil pushers, to con artists, archivists and men who just need to grow up, all seeking some form of connection.”

#### 4. King, Thomas *Indians on Vacation*



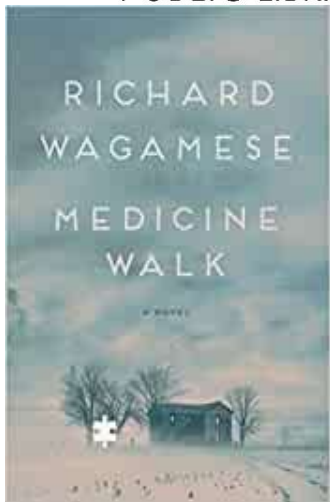
“Inspired by a handful of postcards sent nearly a hundred years ago, Bird and Mimi attempt to trace long-lost uncle Leroy and the family medicine bundle he took with him to Europe.

*“I’m sweaty and sticky. My ears are still popping from the descent into Vaclav Havel. My sinuses ache. My stomach is upset. My mouth is a sewer. I roll over and bury my face in a pillow. Mimi snuggles down beside me with no regard for my distress.*

*‘My god,’ she whispers, ‘can it get any better?’”*

By turns witty, sly and poignant, this is the unforgettable tale of one couple’s holiday in Europe, where their wanderings through its famous capitals reveal a complicated history, both personal and political.”

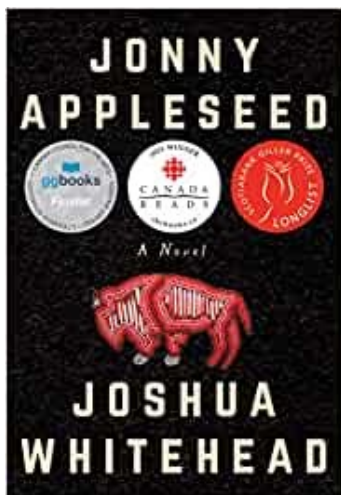
#### 5. Wagamese, Richard *Medicine Walk*



“Franklin Starlight is called to visit his father, Eldon. He’s sixteen years old and has had the most fleeting of relationships with the man. The rare moments they’ve shared haunt and trouble Frank, but he answers the call, a son’s duty to a father. What ensues is a journey through the rugged and beautiful backcountry, and a journey into the past, as the two men push forward to Eldon’s end. From a poverty-stricken childhood, to the Korean War, and later the derelict houses of mill towns, Eldon relates both the desolate moments of his life and a time of redemption and love, and in doing so offers Frank a history he has never known, the father he has never had, and a connection to himself he never expected.

A novel about love, friendship, courage, and the idea that the land has within it powers of healing, *Medicine Walk* reveals the ultimate goodness of its characters and offers a deeply moving and redemptive conclusion. Wagamese’s writing soars and his insight and compassion are matched by his gift of communicating these to the reader.”

6. Whitehead, Joshua  
*Jonny Appleseed*



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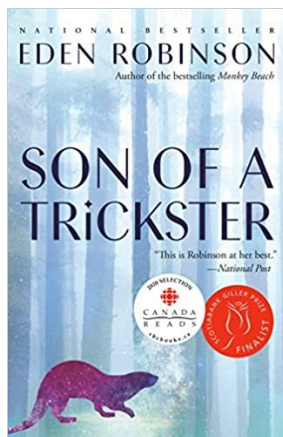
““You're gonna need a rock and a whole lotta medicine” is a mantra that Jonny Appleseed, a young Two-Spirit/Indigiqueer, repeats to himself in this vivid and utterly compelling debut novel by poet Joshua Whitehead.

Off the reserve and trying to find ways to live and love in the big city, Jonny becomes a cybersex worker who fetishizes himself in order to make a living. Self-ordained as an NDN glitter princess, Jonny has one week before he must return to the “rez”--and his former life--to attend the funeral of his stepfather. The seven days that follow are like a fevered dream: stories of love, trauma, sex, kinship, ambition, and the heartbreaking recollection of his beloved kokum (grandmother). Jonny's life is a series of breakages, appendages, and linkages--and as he goes through the motions of preparing to return home, he learns how to put together the pieces of his life.

*Jonny Appleseed* is a unique, shattering vision of First Nations life, full of grit, glitter, and dreams.”

## 7. Robinson, Eden

*Son of a Trickster/Return of the Trickster/Trickster Drift*

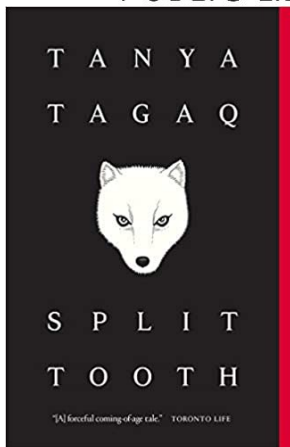


“More than ten years after her Giller-shortlisted title *Monkey Beach*, Eden Robinson returns with a striking and precise coming-of-age novel, in which everyday teen existence meets Indigenous beliefs, crazy family dynamics and cannibalistic river otters.

Meet Jared Martin: sixteen-year-old pot cookie dealer, smoker, drinker and son with the scariest mom ever. But Jared's the pot dealer with a heart of gold--really. Compassionate, caring, and nurturing by nature, Jared's determined to help hold his family together--whether that means supporting his dad's new family with the proceeds from his baking or caring for his elderly neighbours. But when it comes to being cared and loved, Jared knows he can't rely on his family. His only source of love and support was his flatulent pit bull Baby, but she's dead. And then there's the talking ravens and the black outs and his grandmother's perpetual suspicion that he is not human, but the son of a trickster.”

## 8. Tagaq, Tanya

*Split Tooth*



“Fact can be as strange as fiction. It can also be as dark, as violent, as rapturous. In the end, there may be no difference between them.

A girl grows up in Nunavut in the 1970s. She knows joy, and friendship, and parents' love. She knows boredom, and listlessness, and bullying. She knows the tedium of the everyday world, and the raw, amoral power of the ice and sky, the seductive energy of the animal world. She knows the ravages of alcohol, and violence at the hands of those she should be able to trust. She sees the spirits that surround her, and the immense power that dwarfs all of us.

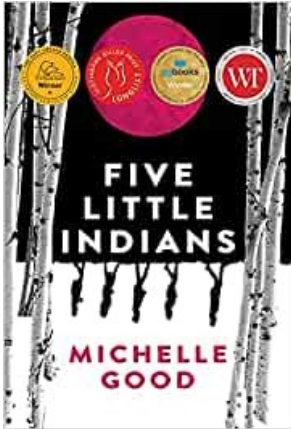
When she becomes pregnant, she must navigate all this.

Veering back and forth between the grittiest features of a small arctic town, the electrifying proximity of the world of animals, and ravishing world of myth, Tanya Tagaq explores a world where the distinctions between good and evil, animal and human, victim and transgressor, real and imagined lose their meaning, but the guiding power of love remains.

Haunting, brooding, exhilarating, and tender all at once, Tagaq moves effortlessly between fiction and memoir, myth and reality, poetry and prose, and conjures a world and a heroine readers will never forget.”

9. Good, Michelle  
*Five Little Indians*

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“Taken from their families when they are very small and sent to a remote, church-run residential school, Kenny, Lucy, Clara, Howie and Maisie are barely out of childhood when they are finally released after years of detention.

Alone and without any skills, support or families, the teens find their way to the seedy and foreign world of Downtown Eastside Vancouver, where they cling together, striving to find a place of safety and belonging in a world that doesn't want them. The paths of the five friends cross and crisscross over the decades as they struggle to overcome, or at least forget, the trauma they endured during their years at the Mission.

Fuelled by rage and furious with God, Clara finds her way into the dangerous, highly charged world of the American Indian Movement. Maisie internalizes her pain and continually places herself in dangerous situations. Famous for his daring escapes from the school, Kenny can't stop running and moves restlessly from job to job—through fishing grounds, orchards and logging camps—trying to outrun his memories and his addiction. Lucy finds peace in motherhood and nurtures a secret compulsive disorder as she waits for Kenny to return to the life they once hoped to share together. After almost beating one of his tormentors to death, Howie serves time in prison, then tries once again to re-enter society and begin life anew.

With compassion and insight, *Five Little Indians* chronicles the desperate quest of these residential school survivors to come to terms with their past and, ultimately, find a way forward.”