

**La Peuplade (Quebec)**

January 2020

320 pages

**Rights sold:** Italian (offer in), Spanish (Destino-Planeta), Polish (Insignis), mass-market France (J'ai Lu).

**English sample available**

**Winner of the BFMTV  
L'Express Readers' Award**

**Paul Kowczak** (1986) was born in France but lives in Quebec. He is the author of the short stories collection *Un long soir* (La Peuplade, 2017).



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## DARKNESS

Paul Kowczak

**A complex and subtle exploration of how refined barbarism can really be.**

One morning in September 1890, a Belgian surveyor under orders from his King to divide Africa, sets off from Léopoldville toward the north. Guided only by the stars and a few rudimentary instruments, Pierre Claes finds himself heading deep into the wild lands on a mission to draw an accurate picture of what the European authorities were calling "progress". He boards the *Fleur de Bruges* and travels up the River Congo, accompanied by Bantu workers and a Chinese master tattoo artist by the name of Xi Xiao, who is also a former executioner skilled in the macabre art of human cutting. Xi Xiao detects the future in all things, he can see the horrors colonization will bring, and he knows he will love the Belgian surveyor with all his heart. *Darkness* is a story of human and geographic dismemberment.

Magic realism meanders throughout this remarkable adventure novel, imbuing the narrative with an undercurrent of forbidden love and all the passion and pain of opera. As it carries readers on a moving journey from Northern Europe to the heart of Africa, the story rolls like a tear of blood down the face of History as we know it.

### Praise

"Reading it felt like walking into a huge pipe organ. So powerful was the musicality of the language (yet so contained) and so hypnotic the beating of the heart of darkness). I became utterly fascinated with every character: the Chinese lovesick killer, the crazy family of butchers, that Manon Blanche who tried to kindle the last flames of a rotting Baudelaire, Silu the savior... how terribly visual it all was! When I finished reading, I felt like the snake tattoos were still slithering behind my closed eyes..." **Hélène Fiamma, J'ai lu, France.**

## THE WEIGHT OF THE SNOW

Christian Guay-Poliquin

**After *Le Fil des kilomètres*, Christian Guay-Poliquin comes back with a dark and hypnotic thriller of a cold and dramatic beauty.**

Just outside a small village, two men – Matthias and an injured young man who has been entrusted to his care – find themselves together in the sun lounge of a formerly grand but now abandoned house with no electricity supply. Their agreement is that the old man will nurse the younger man back to recovery in exchange for firewood, food and, most of all, for a place in the convoy which will depart for the town the following spring.

As the snow grows ever deeper around them, each day brings with it its own assortment of challenges. Huddled by the wood burner, these two individuals laboriously develop a mutual understanding through their conversations and the visits of Joseph, Jonas, Jean, Jude, José and the beautiful Maria. Rumours from the village permeate into their isolated environment, the winter weighs heavily on them and the tension is palpable. Will they be able to hold out?

### What the press said:

« Christian Guay-Poliquin succeeds in offering a dark, claustrophobic and hypnotic thriller. Its beauty is aware of the cold and dramatic landscape, the cracking social bonds, the dismay and the sleeping violence suffocated by winter, all ready to come back to life at the first signs of spring. *Le Poids de la neige* is a Nordic hymn, one of the highlights of the autumn. » **Christian Desmeules, *Le Devoir***

« The brilliant and well-mastered writing of this new author endowed with an already confirmed talent manages to captivate us. » ***La Presse***

**Winner of:** Prix Littéraire Du Gouverneur Général - Prix Littéraire France-Québec – Prix Libr'à Nous - Prix Littéraire des Collégiens - Prix Releve Montérégie - Prix des Lycéens Aieq/Suède/Estonie/Barcelone - Prix Ringuet – Prix des Irrésistables

**Shortlisted for:** Prix des Libraires du Québec – Prix Ouest-France Etonnants Voyageurs



**La Peuplade (Québec)**

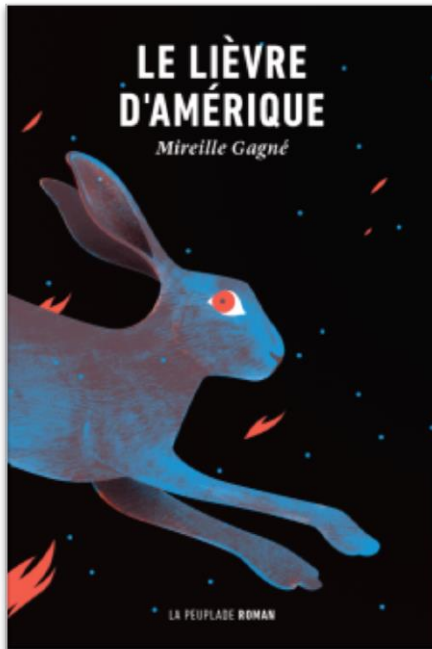
September 2016

312 pages

**Rights sold:** Korean (Bookhouse), Serbian (Vulkan), German (Hoffmann und Campe), Catalan (Perscopi), Ukraine (Vydavnytstvo Anetty Antonenko), Spanish World (Seix Barral - Planeta), English World (TalonBooks), Italian (Marsilio), Albanian (AlephKlub), Armenian (Guitank), Czech (Argo), French France (l'Observatoire, J'ai lu), film rights (Lux For Film).

### About the author

Born in Saint-Armand (Canada) in 1982, **Christian Guay-Poliquin** believes that the art of storytelling is closely linked to practical everyday life and to paying attention to details. *Le Fil des kilomètres* (La Peuplade), his debut novel, was published by Phébus in France and will appear in English with Talon Books.



**La Peuplade (Quebec)**

August 2020

184 pages

**Rights sold:** German

(Wagenbach), pocket France edition (Le Livre de Poche – pre-empt).

*Shortlisted for the Prix Première Plume Furet du Nord-Decitre*

**Mireille Gagné** was born on Isle-aux-Grues and lives in Quebec.

Since 2010, she has published poetry and short stories. *The American Hare* is her first novel.



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## THE AMERICAN HARE

Mireille Gagné

**A timely, modern fable. This tale of transformation defies the storyline itself and unrelentingly picks apart neoliberal violence.**

Diane's body is slowly trying to adapt. She's been sleeping less, she's getting stronger and her endurance is astonishing. She was already a model employee and now she'll be able to exceed expectations at work all the more. And yet, these unexpected effects of her recent surgery are making her panic.

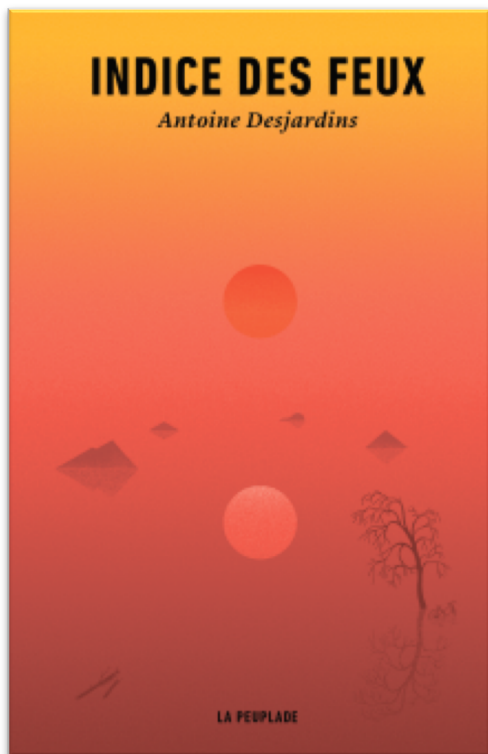
The space inside her head feels like it is getting smaller. She can feel metal where her bones should be. Her senses are heightened: sight, smell, breath. What's most frightening is that all of her hair, head and body turned red overnight. And males are starting to follow her. What is behind this strange transformation? Fifteen years earlier, when she was a teenager, Diane spent a memorable summer on Isle-aux-Grues: Eugene braving the dangers of the raging ocean, his fascination for endangered species and the unforgettable night of the fire.

Akin to Marie Darrieussecq's *Pig Tales*, this novel is a neoliberal animal fable, intended for those who have lost their way.

### Excerpt

"I wonder what it does to our insides to know we're going extinct." Those words resonated with me long after the first time we met. Your parents had just bought the house next to ours. They were right near Pointe-aux-Pins, the highest spot on the island, where it felt like you could stitch together both banks of the river if you spread your arms wide enough. I knew we were going to be more than friends.

You were different. The following day, you came over and knocked on my door like we'd known each other forever.



**La Peuplade (Québec)**

**January 2021**

**360 pages**

**Antoine Desjardins** was born in Quebec City in 1989. He teaches and writes and *Indice des feux* is his first book.



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## FIRE INDEX

Antoine Desjardins

**This is a new form of literature about loss – the loss of the world as we know it. Antoine Desjardins' writing is unrelenting, harsh and deeply beautiful, as if the words themselves had been reduced and purified by fire.**

In the fiery frenzy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the relationship between human beings and the world has been thrown off balance. We watch, powerless, as the environment changes permanently. Antoine Desjardins explores our existential distress through seven compassionate fictional pieces. He questions our deep and troubled inner landscapes. How does the extinction of the black whale affect our love lives? What story do raindrops on a windowpane tell a teen strapped to a hospital bed? More importantly, how can we perpetuate hope and a sense of wonder to children raised in an environmental crisis? This work lovingly addresses these and many other questions with finesse and without being smug or overly moral.

*Indice des feux* paints the portrait of an uncertain future and reminds us the game is not yet over.

### Excerpt

The room is empty. Not a person in sight. Nothing. Not my family, nor Francine, not the doctor, nor the machines, not the wardrobe, the tables or the couch. All gone. It is all under at least three feet of water that is still visibly rising. It's pouring in from everywhere – from holes in the walls, an open window, from the sink as it spills over onto the floor, from the ceiling... No. It's not coming from the ceiling anymore. I can see the sky, the clouds going by. Search me, but the walls are fucking gone. Vanished. So, I tiptoe off, like I'm levitating or I'm on a flying carpet or something. I'm floating. In my jacket in the middle of the smooth sea, as calm as a lake on a windless day, I drift on my makeshift mattress-raft.





**La Peuplade (Quebec)**

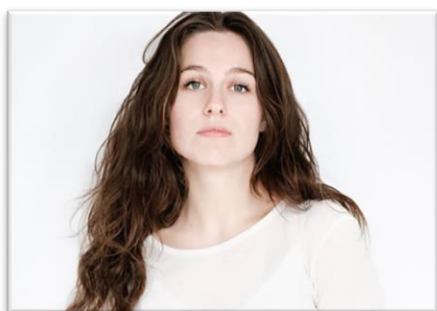
February 2020

224 pages

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### The Author

**Virginie DeChamplain** was born and raised near the river in Rimouski (Quebec). She never really left it. *The Cliffs* is her first novel.



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## THE CLIFFS

Virginie DeChamplain

**A novel that takes femininity into uncharted territory, combining individual memory with family collective unconscious. It mixes the language of the feminine with resilience in an intimate and moving odyssey between sisters, daughters, women and lovers.**

V. just learned her mother's body was found washed up on the banks of the Saint Lawrence River in the Gaspésie, at the edge of the earth. She rushes back there, to her childhood home and builds an "island" for herself in the middle of the drafty living room. With the help of her grandmother's journals, it is a place designed to help her discover and erase the history of her family's female line...or bring it back. V. is completely absorbed in the journals and cannot stop reading. Her only escape is behind the counter at the local bar, topped with ethereal red hair and named Chloe.

The Cliffs is a tale about bringing order to chaos. It is a dreamlike journey, historical and feminine, bringing survivors together, mothers and daughters alike. From the Gaspésie to Iceland, they all have trouble staying put, choosing rather to be elsewhere and continually uprooting themselves.

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### Press

"A tempestuous debut novel about a raging personal journey to catch up with women on the run. From one far-off place to another, from cliff to cliff, there is a long history of missed encounters, necessary departures and overly-delayed homecomings. It embraces the demons of its valorous and 'nutty' heroines, who long for the wide-open sky and go where the wind carries them. Like these women, Virginie DeChamplain's writing is breathtaking." **Véronique Rossignol, *Livres Hebdo*.**