



## BOOK RELEASE

### *Reading By Lightning*

Joan Thomas

**WINNER 2009 Commonwealth Writers' Prize for the Best First Book in the Canada and Caribbean Region**

**SHORTLISTED 2009 Margaret Laurence Award for Fiction, 2009 McNally Robinson Book of the Year Award, 2009 Eileen McTavish Sykes Award for Best First Book**

Joan Thomas's long-awaited first novel, *Reading by Lightning*, captures the moods and conflicts of urban England and a God-fearing Canadian prairie town during the tempestuous years leading up to the Second World War.

Lily Piper and her family live in an ephemeral world, due to collapse at any moment when the Lord comes to pluck the faithful from the drought-ravaged prairies. Lily tries to be ready for the coming Day of Judgment, but she's restless and imaginative. When the Lord still hasn't come and puberty hits, Lily is sent to England to live with her father's relatives and goes about the project of reinventing herself. She falls in love with her adopted cousin, George, surrenders her notions of goodness, and waits with the rest of England for the Second World War to start, until circumstances call her home to face a future she thought she had escaped.

*Reading by Lightning* observes the emergence of a personality in the face of intruding ideologies. With prose that is elegant and wry, devastatingly funny and confident, Joan Thomas tells us something about how we make sense of the future when the future is something we can hardly imagine.

JOAN THOMAS grew up on the Canadian prairies. She has worked as a freelance writer, reviewer, and editor and is the winner of a National Magazine Award. She has been a frequent book reviewer for *The Globe and Mail* and a feature writer for the *Winnipeg Free Press* and *Prairie Fire*. She is co-editor (with Heidi Harms) of *Turn of the Story: Canadian Short Fiction on the Eve of the Millennium*. She has also served on the editorial boards for Turnstone Press and *Prairie Fire* magazine.

Joan Thomas lives on the banks of the Red River with her husband and daughter, happy to be part of Winnipeg's active arts community and resolutely in love with winter.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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High-res book cover and author image files are available at [www.gooselane.com](http://www.gooselane.com).

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