



BOOK RELEASE

Going Fast Elaine McCluskey

Fiction
ISBN-13 978-0-86492-525-1
376 pp / 5.5 x 8.5/ pb
\$22.95 (Canada) \$16.95 (US)
Pub Date Canada: March 20, 2009
Pub Date USA: April 17, 2009

“Tender and tough-minded, compassionate and dark, exceptionally well written and frequently hilarious. Elaine McCluskey has written a stunning debut novel.” — Paul Quarrington

For this punchy, uproarious debut novel, Elaine McCluskey has created a world in which each character is in search of something — success, legitimacy, a way to deal with demons from the past — while the worlds they know — boxing, newspapers, athletic glory — are disappearing all around them.

Owgie Flanagan, a boxing trainer from the old days, is looking for “one real fighter” before he retires. He is not ready to give up or give in, to spend his days at home where his wife runs a cake-decorating business. He works at Tootsy’s, a Dartmouth gym that supports itself by training men with big ambition and vanity but little talent.

Scott MacDonald is a sports reporter with the local paper, assigned to the boxing beat and looking for a story when he meets Owgie. A former competitive kayaker, Scott knows what it is to win and what it is to push oneself to the limits of physical endurance. Yet, he’s stuck, unable to get over his glory days as a paddler, unsure what to do with his future. And he thinks he has found something in the boxing gym where Owgie trains. As he spends more and more time around Owgie and the fighters he trains, he spends less and less at the paper. Like the gym, the newsroom seems like something from a bygone era, whose inhabitants must adapt or be forced out.

Both Owgie and Scott are forced to re-examine themselves and their desires when Turmoil Davies arrives on the scene. A charismatic heavyweight from Trinidad with huge potential, Turmoil is larger-than-life, excessive, and enigmatic. With Owgie’s help, Turmoil moves up through the rankings and seems to single-handedly revive the sport of boxing in the region, until he begins to display some odd behaviour.

Peopled with characters from the margins of society, *Going Fast* rings with devastating insight and wicked humour that displays all of the toughness of the sport. Employing a full measure of linguistic dexterity, McCluskey has created a larger-than-life world where illusions are as real and as unpredictable as the next ten-count.

“A linguistic tour de force. Elaine McCluskey’s probing eye for detail is as relentless as a welterweight. Her prose is sharp, insightful, and ribbingly humorous.” — Leo McKay Jr.

ELAINE MCCLUSKEY is a former news editor and bureau chief for the Canadian Press in Halifax. She has also worked as a reporter at CBC Television and the Halifax Chronicle-Herald. She now teaches at the school of journalism at King’s College in Halifax. Her short-story collection, *The Watermelon Social*, was published in the spring of 2006 and shortlisted for the Margaret and John Savage First Book Award. Her fiction has also appeared in the *Journey Prize Anthology* and in *The Fiddlehead*, *The Antigonish Review*, *The Dalhousie Review*, *Gaspereau Review*, and *Room of One’s Own*.

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McCluskey grew up in a boxing household; her father, Tom, and three of his brothers were inducted into the Prince Edward Island Sports Hall of Fame for their contributions to the sport. She lives in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia.

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