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Louise Penny's November Newsletter

"If there are no dogs in heaven, then when I die I want to go where they went." - Will Rogers

A kind reader sent that quote, and I thought you might like it too. We have, on our front door, a small quote that says, 'Be the kind of person your dog thinks you are.'

It sounds silly, trite even. Too saccharine to be of real use. And yet I find as I get older, the things that are so easily laughed off are the ones I find most helpful.

As those of you who've read the website know, Michael and I have learned a great deal from our dogs. Especially Seamus. The foundling. Old and crippled and neglected. He came up our road, and into our yard. And made his home with us for the rest of his days.

He had no reason to love us, to trust us. Indeed, he had every reason to despise people. But he didn't. He was kind and loving, forgiving and tolerant to the end. Like Gamache's old dog, Sonny - it wasn't that his heart stopped, but that he'd finally given it all away.

Michael and I try to be worthy of that love. We aspire to be Seamus. And Bonnie and Maggie and now Trudy. Except for the poopsickle thing. That they can have.

Awards and great times on tour

September was a whirlwind of excitement, as HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN was published and hit #1 on the New York Times list, and hit almost every other bestseller list in North America. I had such fun on tour.

And then at Bouchercon THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY won both the Anthony and the Macavity awards for Best Crime Novel in the US!

It was so exciting! A time I'll never forget.

While at Bouchercon in Albany, I was a guest on Joe Donahue's NPR show, THE BOOK SHOW. [Here's a link to the conversation, if you'd like to listen.](#)

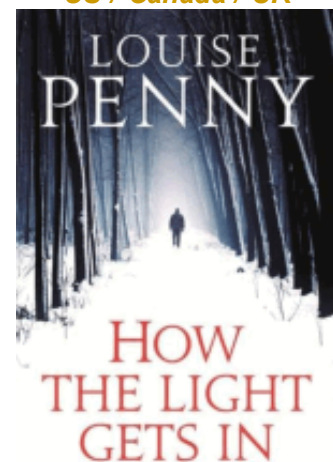
Reader Feedback

And the excitement continues, with HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN still on bestseller lists, and being given special promotion from bookstores. Cannot tell you how happy I am.

Mostly, of course, I am beyond thrilled to have heard from so many



How The Light Gets In
US / Canada / UK



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(IMBA) The Independent Mystery Booksellers Association

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readers about the book.

This was such a difficult one to write, but one that I knew was coming for years.

I was very afraid that I'd be hit by a truck before finishing it...clearly for many reasons this would not have been my first choice of things to have happen to me. But honestly, if I had to die, I would have felt awful leaving Gamache, Clara, Jean-Guy and so many other of the characters unresolved.

They've given me so much joy - given me a life I could never even have dreamed of. I felt I owed them this book. And I knew I owed it to you. Who have stuck with me, trusted me - even when you weren't sure where I was going. Even when you didn't particularly agree with the direction. You stayed.

I owed you HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN.

Happily (for so many reasons) I do not yet know if there are dogs in Heaven. Or elsewhere. I'm still here....and HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN is now in bookstores and in your hands.

The reception has been wonderful. And now I feel I can finally exhale.

By the way, you can see one reader in the photo at the top, on the right. That's our friend and neighbour, Walter, reading it on their porch.

Thanksgiving

October was filled with wonderful personal events. Michael and I headed off to Edmonton to visit my older brother Rob, his wife Audi and their grown kids for Thanksgiving. (yes, our Thanksgiving is earlier than the American one). My younger brother Doug and his family came from Toronto. We had a bonfire, and roasted hot dogs, and then on Thanksgiving Sunday we had a turkey and sweet potatoes and mashed potatoes and stuffing and gravy and pumpkin pie. And naps.

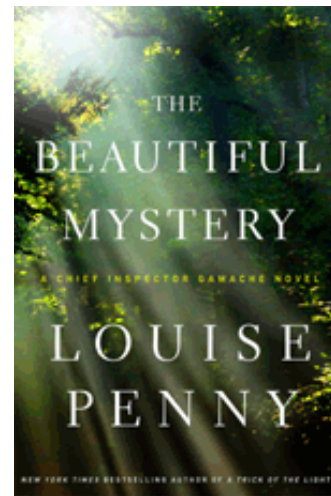
And privately, secretly, I thought about the extra special place Thanksgiving now holds for me since it's the setting of my very first book, STILL LIFE. Every year now I think about Clara, Gabri, Ruth, Jane, Olivier et al, gathered for their Thanksgiving.

So much has changed since then. For them and for us.

London

We headed back to Quebec, did laundry, then hopped on another plane and came to London. As some of you know, we've rented a flat here for a year....but travel back and forth. A long standing dream, come true. We finally asked ourselves what we were waiting for.

If not now, when?



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Here's the order of the **Chief Inspector Gamache** books, from the first to the most recent:

STILL LIFE

A FATAL GRACE / DEAD COLD

THE CRUELEST MONTH

A RULE AGAINST MURDER / THE MURDER STONE

THE BRUTAL TELLING

BURY YOUR DEAD

A TRICK OF THE LIGHT

THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY

HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN

So we found a flat in Michael's sister's building and we try to get over as often as possible.

Loving it here!!! Afternoon teas, jumping on the busses. Walking. Walking. London, like New York, is a place to walk. And Michael, who's almost 80, is in his element. Never seen him happier.

A cream tea will do that.

I have a few events here, but mostly I'm trying to write the next book. I was halfway through when we arrived in late October. Am hoping to get the first draft done by the time we leave, just before Christmas.

My routine is to write in the morning, then Michael and I are free to play in London in the afternoon.

How lucky we are.

Vive Gamache - Brome Lake Books

I did want to mention that Danny and Lucy at Brome Lake Books in Knowlton (a village near our Quebec home) have got in a new order of Vive Gamache mugs, as well as other items, if you're interested.

There's also the special signed and bound UK edition of HOW THE LIGHT GETS IT, with a forward by the magnificent Peter Lovesey. [Here's the link for that.](#)

Wanted to give you a heads up about all those things before Christmas.

UK November event

We were considering spending Christmas here in London but have to say, nothing quite beats a Quebec Christmas for us. So home we go just before the holiday.

Here in the UK, I'm trying to really focus on writing, and having fun with Michael, so I've declined all events, except one. **I'll be at Heffers, a great independent bookstore in Cambridge, on the evening of November 21st** (Blackwell's Cambridge, Heffers, 20 Trinity Street) [for ticket information click here.](#)

Would love to see you there!

Canadian literacy project - The Hangman

Oh, I also wanted to explain something about the novella, THE HANGMAN. It's a Gamache story, set in Three Pines, and was written a few years ago as a Canadian literacy project. As such, I don't consider it part of the 'Gamache Canon'.

The idea was to write an adult story, but at a learner level in terms of language. That's why it might seem simplistic, linguistically. I notice some people are confused, and even annoyed, by THE HANGMAN. It really is aimed at people who are emerging readers, or have had a stroke and are re-learning the language.

It is also deliberately short, for those same reasons.

THE HANGMAN is no longer available in print, but can be downloaded, I believe, in both Canada and the US. It's a fundraiser, too, for literacy.

Hope that clears up some understandable questions.

Hope you've had a good October, and that November is safe and filled with comfort and happiness.

And please know that I think of you everyday, with awareness of how much joy you've brought to my life.

With warm embraces,

Louise

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