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## Louise Penny's January Newsletter

*"Begin, be bold, and venture to be wise."*  
**Horace**



### 2014

Happy New Year! Happy, healthy, merry, joyous, loving, content, compassionate, kind 2014!

We're starting the new year here in Quebec with light snow, and lit hearths, and hot chocolates and skiing and skating and reading by the fire. We decided to celebrate the turning of the New Year in UK time (essentially 7pm our time) - then went to bed when tired. We're trying not to care about, or notice, the extra folds of flesh thanks to the mince tarts and turkey, and holiday treats.

But that's for tomorrow. Today, 2014 is like the field outside our door. Pristine, perfect, unblemished. Untested and untried. Filled with potential.

Today Michael and I relax and admire the perfect 2014 - tomorrow we start across it.

It's always so exciting. We just never know what we'll find. A year ago, standing on the edge of 2013, I could never, ever have predicted the terrain ahead.

### Remarkable year

I knew that HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN would be published, but I had no idea it would debut at #1 on the New York Times list.

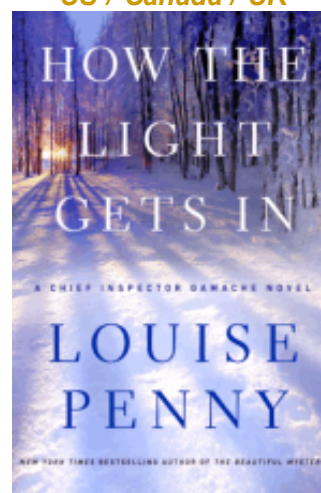
It would have been impossible to foresee the remarkable reception for HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN. Though, to be fair, I did dream of it. What author wouldn't? But it never occurred to me that the best would actually happen. What joy!

Here are some of the other amazing professional things that have happened:

### HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN

- Named one of the top 5 fiction books of 2013 by the Washington Post
- Named one of the top crime fiction books by NPR
- Named a Book of the Year by Barnes and Noble
- Named a top crime fiction book by The Globe and Mail

### How The Light Gets In US / Canada / UK



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**The Beautiful Mystery  
US / Canada / UK**

- BookBrowse named it the Best Fiction Book of 2013
- Publisher's Weekly named it one of the Top Crime Fiction Books of 2013
- Amazon.com and Amazon.ca both named it a Best Book of the year
- Made bestseller lists internationally
- Library Journal named the audio book one of the top mysteries of the year, and the fabulous Ralph Cosham one of the top narrators of 2013
- AudioFile Magazine awarded it a coveted Headphone Award

## THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY

- Won the Anthony, Agatha and Macavity awards for Best Crime Novel of 2013

- Won the Audie Award for Best Audio Crime Fiction of the Year, a award recognizing Ralph Cosham. (And I traveled to New York to be his 'date' for the evening!)

What a year. And much of it thanks to you. We're partners in this. I might write the books, but you champion Gamache and Three Pines. You read the books, listen to them, spread the word. Without you none of this would be happening.

I'm deeply aware of that, and eternally grateful for this life you've given me.

Thank you.

Last January we hadn't yet rented the flat in London. If you'd told me a year ago that we'd spend four months of the year in a magical apartment in Chelsea, meeting such interesting people and being close to Michael's sister - well, I'd have thanked you for the happy thought, then backed slowly away from the crazy person.

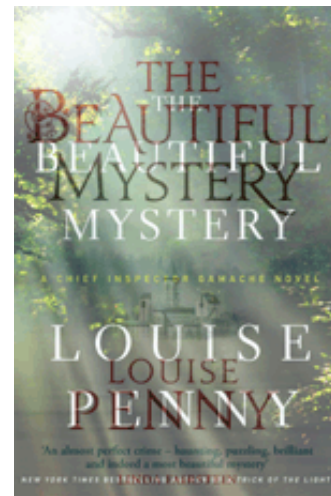
And yet, it happened. You just never know.

We could never have seen that our great friend Jim would die. And of course, as with your life, there have been other losses. Some small, some slow, some unexpected and a few that have been approaching for so long that their arrival seems a surprise.

I won't bore you with the details of our lives of the past year - the beauty of writing to you each month is that we've walked the path together. You're as aware as I am of the great gifts - all the greater for being unexpected. And all the more precious because they're shared by, and with, with so many. Including you.

The gifts include the losses - because we were so fortunate to have had them in our lives at all.

The year ended with some wonderful events in London. Michael, his son's Mike and Victor, our friend



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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**

Rosemary and her son Tim, and I joined thousands of others at the Royal Albert Hall for a Christmas carol concert (pictured above). My God, I still tremble just remembering standing there, surrounded by so many others, all voices raised in O Come All Ye Faithful. Silent Night. Hark the Herald.

And then we left glorious London, to an even more glorious Quebec. In an ice storm. Power out, roads impassable, trees down. But still home.

We finally made it back to the Eastern Townships on Dec 23rd, to find that friends (that includes My Assistant Lise) had decorated our home, put up a tree, put food in the fridge.

I've lived in many parts of Canada and am deeply proud of being a Canadian (warts and all). I believe some people think I'm romanticizing, or idealizing, the towns and villages and people - but the fact is, I can't come close to capturing how very kind and generous they are.

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## 2014 March event

And now here we are, my friend, looking out at 2014.

While we have very little idea what lies ahead, I do know a couple of amazing events.

In late March (19th to 23rd) Michael and I will be in Monterey, for Left Coast Crime - where I'll be one of the guests of honor, along with the fabulous Cara Black, Sue Grafton, Marcia Muller, Bill Pronzini, Brad Parks and Sue Trowbridge. If you'd like to join us, it's a great crime writers/readers gathering. [Here's the link](#). It would be wonderful to see you there.

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## New Year's Honour - Order of Canada

But there's something else I've been longing to tell you. Something I was told about a few weeks ago, but had to keep secret. It'll be announced today, in the Governor General's New Year's Honour list.

### **I've been awarded the Order of Canada.**

This is the highest civilian honour in the nation. And all I could think of was how my parents would have felt. How my grandparents would have felt.

And how much I owe to Michael. Who believed in me, and Gamache. Who said he'd support me as I tried, and tried, to write that first book. Then tried and tried to get STILL LIFE published. When no one wanted it. He said he'd support me, and he did.

This is the greatest honour of my life. And I share it with V. Michael Whitehead. My husband. The lovely man who inspired Gamache.

I have no idea what 2014 will bring - what blessings and triumphs and losses, but I do know how very, very fortunate I have been, and am. Not in the awards, but in sharing them with such a remarkable man. And remarkable friends. And family. And community. And country.

And you.

Merci mille fois, mon ami. Thank you, my friend.

Happy New Year. Bonne Année.

Louise and Michael (and Trudy)

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