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Louise Penny's December Newsletter

Dear First name

"Salary is no object: I only want enough to keep body and soul apart." - **Dorothy Parker**

Here we are, heading in to the holiday season! Hope you're ready for it. But is anyone really ready? Somehow, for me, it still always feels a rush right to Christmas.

I love Christmas. Everything about it. The music, the lights, the decorations. The food. Dear Lord, the food! The shortbread, the mince tarts, the hard sauce. The chocolate covered cherries and licorice all sorts. What could be better than sitting by the fire, under a blanket, drinking egg nog, eating shortbread and reading? Michael in his big chair across from me. The Christmas tree decorated and lit. Snow falling outside and Trudy on the rug, upside-down, legs dangling in the air and eyes closed.

Interview photograph

The photo above was taken for an article in The Globe and Mail a few days ago, where they asked what I was reading, and where is my favorite place on earth to read.

You can see my answer.

The truth is, though, when asked the question I was reading 'Where Men Find Glory', the biography of Pat Tillman, the NFL player who quit after 9/11 to fight. He was killed. By friendly fire. Very sad story. But by the time the photo was taken I'd finished the book and left it at our rented flat in London! So in the picture I'm trying to obscure the cover - because the book I'm actually reading is by a McGill University professor named Daniel Levitin called, 'This is Your Brain on Music.' Fascinating.

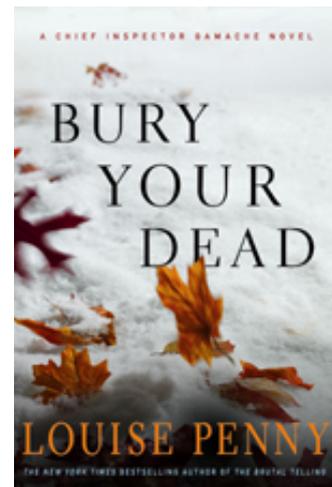
Book tour adventures

We're back from tour! Two months on the road. I want to fumigate then destroy my clothes. Actually, I did get to launder them a few times, but I quickly grew weary of the same three outfits. Rotated so that people didn't see the same one twice. But I did. And Michael did. Though, God bless him, he never notices.

What a time it's been. When I closed the door to leave home at the end of September I rested my hand there - for a moment. Knowing that a lot would happen before I touched home again. But I had no idea what adventures I was in for.

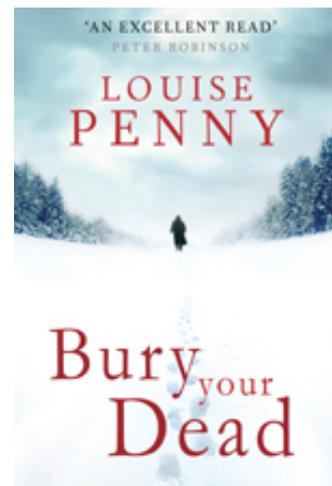
Would there be flight delays? Bad weather? Would it feel like a struggle everyday just to get where I'm going? The tour took me from

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Ottawa to Toronto to Pittsburgh and New England - to Phoenix and Houston and Nashville - up to Regina and Calgary - then over to San Francisco - and back across the continent to Toronto, where I did a reading at the International Festival of Authors - (if you [click here](#) you can listen in via the Globe and Mail website), after that we travelled to Quebec City then London. At one point in London we were two cars behind this massively ornate horse-drawn carriage that turned out to be carrying the Queen, (though in London you never know) returning from a Remembrance Day service.

She turned in at Buckingham Palace. We did not.

We had such fun in London - having afternoon tea (the photo above shows us having tea at the Capital Hotel on Basil Street), going to galleries, walking through parks. Had lunch with two magnificent crime writers, Deborah Crombie and Ann Cleeves - both good friends (that's us in the picture at the top of the newsletter). And met with my agent and editor and publishers.

And ate. I wonder if there's a reason they call it clotted cream?

The tour was both great fun and very emotional. Having to leave our good friend Louise so soon after her loss. And getting to visit McKenna at Murder By the Book in Houston, so soon after losing David. And seeing Lesa in Phoenix for the first time since she lost her beloved husband.

When I left home I didn't know if anyone would buy BURY YOUR DEAD, or like it. Or come out to the events. Would I be standing at the front of empty rooms, as I did at the beginning of my career

The next Three Pines book

In the meantime I also handed in the manuscript for the next book. Like most writers I work a year in advance, so that before the one book comes out the next one is finished. I have to tell you, it's incredibly stressful waiting to hear what the editors think.

Thank God they love the next Three Pines book! What a relief. But until I heard I felt queasy just thinking about it. My baby out of my hands, crossing the literary road all by itself.

But when I feel slightly overwhelmed I need to remember that I'm living the life I once only dreamed of. To be on a successful tour where my office is a bookstore filled with people who like what I do.

How wonderful is that?

It is so difficult to write and then tour with a book, that when people are kind and supportive it means the world. So I want to take a moment to sincerely thank you for your stout and heartfelt support. Not just for coming to events, but all your emails and kind [blog](#) posts and reviews. And I want to thank you for trusting me with the characters I created and love. I know you care about them too and have come to love them and see them as much more than words on a page. You've brought them to life - and I find that just thrilling.

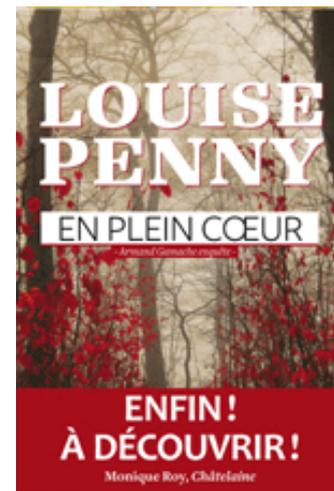
If you'd like to become friends on Facebook that would be fun. Just [click here](#).

Wow moments

And what a response to BURY YOUR DEAD!

It immediately hit the New York Times list, the USA Today list, the American Booksellers Association list.

Still Life US/ French editions

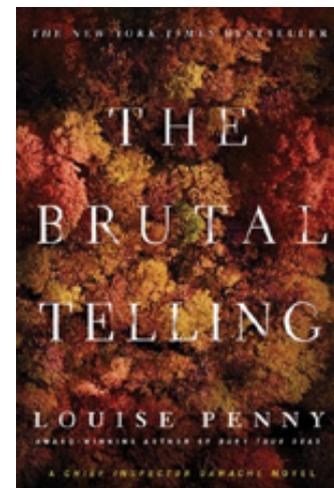


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It's been chosen one of the Top Crime Novels of the Year by Publisher's Weekly, and one of their Top 100 Books published in 2010.

Amazon named BURY YOUR DEAD one of their Top 10 crime/thrillers of 2010, and the audio version (with the brilliant Ralph Cosham) was named the second best audio book of the year, just behind Johnny Depp's narration of Keith Richard's autobiography, LIFE.

The Toronto Globe and Mail put BURY YOUR DEAD on its Best Mysteries of 2010 list and the fabulous independent mystery bookstore, Aunt Agatha's has also named BURY YOUR DEAD a top 10 book.

THE BRUTAL TELLING this year won both the Agatha and the Anthony Awards for Best Crime Novel in the United States.

And even the literacy novella, THE HANGMAN, has been noticed. It has been longlisted in Alberta for their prestigious Reader's Choice Award.

Gamache café au lait mugs

With Christmas not too far away I wanted to mention the Vive Gamache café au lait mugs. Here's a photo of one.

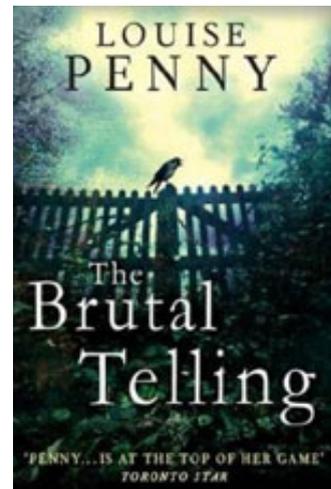


If you'd like a mug, just email Danny and Lucy at Brome Lake Books blb@b2b2c.ca - they're our local bookstore. Wonderful place, and really terrific people. They've put in a new order, since the mugs have proved very popular - but I know they're going fast. So I thought I'd mention it now. They also have signed book plates and a birthday calendar. I have one of those - only way I have a hope of keeping track of people's important dates.

A picture tells a thousand words

And, as a last word, I tell people quite truthfully that my books, while clearly and happily murder mysteries are really about duality. The gap between what is said and what is felt. The public face and the inner truth.

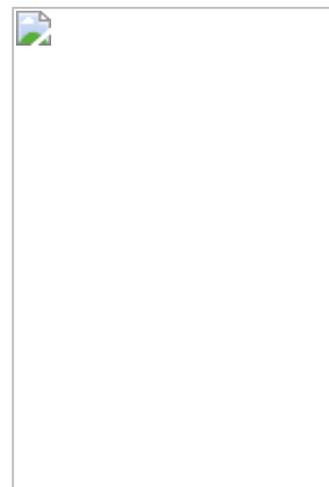
At the top of the newsletter you see the official photo Gary took a week ago for the article. Well, here's another one he took. The real me - the inner me. The inner mess. (since I no longer drink, this part is well buried, though perhaps not altogether dead).



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Merry Christmas. Happy Hanukkah.

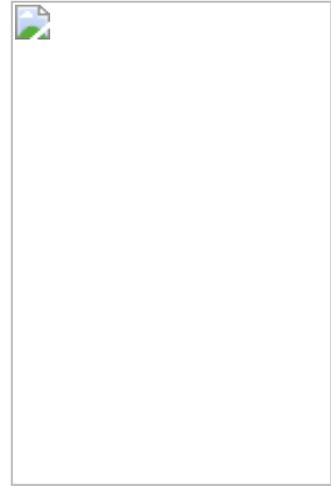
I wish for you what I wish for Michael, and all the people I love - including myself. Not that life be perfect, but that whatever happens we will know peace.

Namaste.

Louise, Michael and Trudy

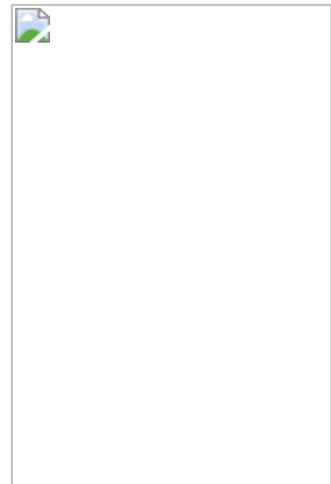


PS - one last photo. Of Michael and me yesterday at breakfast at Hovey Manor. Celebrating the end of the tour.



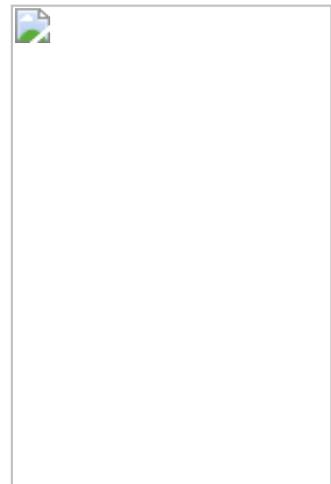
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