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Louise Penny's December Newsletter

*A 'Twas in the moon of winter-time
When all the birds had fled,
That mighty Gitchi Manitou
Sent angel choirs instead...*

The Huron Carol

December already. Can you believe it? Michael and I are in London still, loving the time here, but also missing home. Trudy, friends, even missing snow, God help us! I wanted to use the lyrics from The Huron Carol to open this newsletter. If you've read HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN you know the old carol plays a role.

It's one of my favorite carols. It's purely Canadian, written in the 1640's by the Jesuit missionary Jean de Brébeuf. He wrote it in Huron, for the Huron people, and used imagery he felt they would relate to. He also used, for the music, an old French folk song, 'Une Jeune Pucelle'.

I find it haunting and very, very beautiful. Like Quebec itself. I listened to it over and over while thinking about HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN. [Here's the version I listened to by Terry McDade and the McDades.](#) He sings it in the original Huron, French and English. This link will take you to YouTube. I eventually bought the song and now it's part of my permanent playlist, no matter the season.

Quebec Christmas

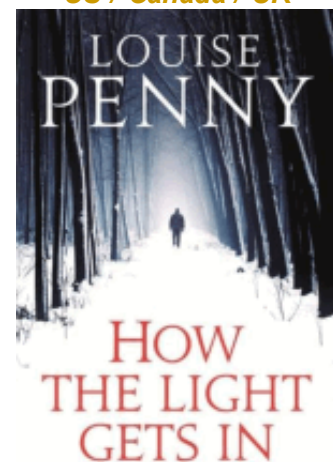
Michael and I considered staying in London for Christmas, but when we really thought about it we realized there was nothing more magical for us than being in Quebec for the holiday. In our home. With Trudy, and the fireplace, and the Christmas tree all decorated. Our music. Our friends. Snow outside and a turkey in the oven. Going to the little chapel in the next village for midnight service (which is actually at 9pm. Shhhhh).

When I describe a Quebec Christmas in the books, I'm not romanticizing or idealizing. There really are tourtières and mince tarts in the oven. Snow thick on the boughs and piled high along the roads from the ploughs. There are skaters on frozen ponds, skiers on the hills and the scent of hot chocolate and cinnamon and peppermint. There's the easy blend of the Québécois and English traditions. And carols. Il est né, Minuit Chretien (which was the original version of O Holy Night), Oh Come all Ye Faithful. And, of course, The Huron Carol.

We're looking forward to getting home for Christmas. But, have to say, the charms of London go a very long way to compensate, and London at Christmas has a magic all its own.



How The Light Gets In
US / Canada / UK



Click if you wish to order
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The decorations are spectacular. And for those of us who love carols, there's a sing-along every night it seems. We have tickets to two Christmas Carol events - one at the church around the corner from us. Holy Trinity, on the evening of Dec 6th, with our friend Sarah who'll be visiting us from New York City. There will be mince pies and hot cider on Sloane Street before the performance.

Then, when two of Michael's sons visit, we have tickets to the Royal Albert Hall Christmas sing-a-long, on December 19th. Our friend Rosemary and her son will also be joining us. My plan is to stand beside Michael's oldest son, Mike, because he has the most beautiful voice in the world - and I hope people might think I'm contributing to it.

Is there anything better than singing carols en masse? Glorious.

Remarkable year - HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN

Have to say, the season has already been glorious! We have heard that HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN has been named to a number of Best of lists including:

The Washington Post named it one of the 5 best fiction books of the year in the US! [Here's the link.](#)

The Toronto Globe and Mail named it one of the top 100 books, and one of the best crime novels of 2013.

Amazon has named HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN one of the top 10 crime novels of the year.

Publisher's Weekly has named the book to its Best Crime Novels of 2013 list.

And for those who love listening to books, AudioFile Magazine has named HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN one of the year's Best Crime Novels, and has also named the remarkable Ralph Cosham one of the year's top narrators. I know many of you agree! Congratulations, Ralph. And thank you for doing such a superb job.

Thanks to you, HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN was shortlisted for Best Crime Novel at [Goodreads](#) (the winner will be announced Dec 3rd).

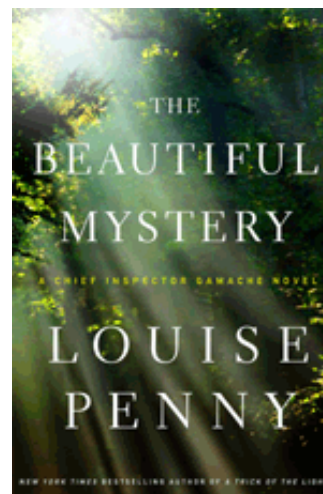
This has been just the most remarkable year for us. Thanks to you. For reading the books, for telling friends and family and strangers. For choosing them for book clubs and getting onto blogs and social media and championing Gamache et al.

Thank you!!

Vive Gamache - Brome Lake Books

Now, quite a few of you have written to ask about giving the Vive Gamache mugs and the Eau de Gamache cologne as Christmas gifts.

If you're interested, [here's the link](#) for the café au lait mugs, as well as other Three Pines and Gamache items. You can get them through Danny and Lucy at Brome Lake Books in Knowlton.



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Here's the order of the **Chief Inspector Gamache** books, from the first, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif 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

Eau de Gamache

As for the cologne, Michael and I worked with the master perfumeur at Floris, in London and came up with his cologne. If you're interested, you can write to Floris.

Here's the email address, fragrance@florislondon.com **And please put Eau de Gamache on the subject line.**

I must warn you that because it's a unique blend, it is terrifically expensive. But it sure makes a fun gift. Michael wears it all the time and people never fail to comment on it.

My Assistant Lise, Michael and I are very, very careful about the products that we allow the Gamache name or Three Pines onto. That's why there are so few of them. We want to maintain quality, and make sure they're items we ourselves would take pleasure in. Hope you enjoy them too!

November in London

November was such a fun month in London. I worked most mornings on the next book (and no, I'm still not telling you anything about it), then spent most afternoons playing in this great city. Went to the Daumier exhibition at the Royal Academy. Went to Book of Mormon at the Prince of Wales theatre.

We went to Heffers (pictured above) in Cambridge for an event with the wonderful Richard Reynolds. Thanks to all of you who came out!

And we had dinner with the Canadian High Commissioner and his wife, at their official residence. It was a dinner they hosted for me, and so it was an incredible honour. Gordon Campbell, the High Commissioner, and his wife Nancy, were gracious, generous, thoughtful. The room was filled with influential critics, magazine editors, journalists. My UK publishers, Little, Brown. My agent Teresa Chris was there.

I, true to form, was dreading it. Hoping to survive without terminal damage to my career. But once there, it was such fun. It was indescribably kind of the High Commissioner, his people and my publishers to organize this.

Finally, as a little Christmas gift to you, since I know you love books as much as I do, [here's an article from the New York Times](#). It finally explains the intricacies of the publishing industry. It's hilarious!

Merry Christmas. Happy Hanukkah.

With love and thanks for all your gifts to us -

Louise and Michael

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