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Louise Penny

June Newsletter



God, grant me the serenity,
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.

PASTURES NEW

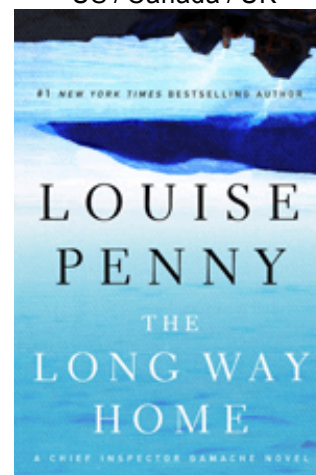
Ahhh – the serenity prayer. How often have I sat on the bench at the far end of the pond and repeated it? Or on overcrowded subway cars. Or at dinner parties. For years. Over and over.

And how often have I ignored it completely? I must have a bump on my head the size of a goose egg from banging against all those locked doors and thick walls and dead ends.

One of the many unexpected gifts of living with a soul-mate with dementia is learning a whole bunch of things. Many of which I will not go into, but one huge lesson is patience. Never my long suit. But now I must learn to be patient, or explode. Sometimes exploding seems the easier option.

The other thing I have realized is how much I crave stability. And how uncomfortable I get when things are changing all the time. Like now. What was reality one day, shifts, and we wake up to a new reality.

The Long Way Home US / Canada / UK



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How The Light Gets In US / Canada / UK

The big new reality I woke up to in May was that we could not continue to live in our home. I promised Michael we would never leave it, but it's a promise I just can't keep. (That's another thing I'm learning....not to make promises. D'oh.)

This is our dream home, the first one we made together. With ponds and walking paths, a swimming pool and fireplaces. And memories. It was perfect. And now it is no longer perfect.

It's too big, too much for me to handle on my own, too far into the countryside, and too many stairs.

London taught me a few things....that Michael needs to be on one level. And we both need to be in a community. Where we can pop out and see people. Or they can pop in. Where we can go for lunch everyday, or a café au lait, without a 20 minute drive.

This is the home where Gamache and Three Pines was conceived and born. And raised. Where every book was written, and read, over and over until it was ready for the world. It will always be, for both of us, a magical place.

But it is no longer the right place for us. It's someone else's turn.

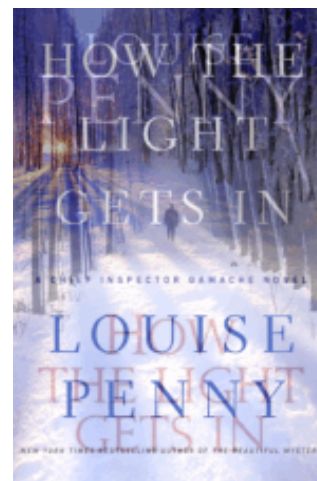
And so we're moving to a nearby village. Not exactly a sea change. Most of our friends are there. Danny and Lucy and the bookstore are there. It's closer to My Assistant Lise, and Her Husband Del. And it's home to all sorts of community activities, like the theatre, and the library, and the radio station.

And you know what? I am so relieved. Once the decision was made it was so clearly the right one. And then, like magic, the perfect new home appeared, which we scooped up.

So that's the big news.

MAY

May was filled with activity....from buying a new more manageable home, to putting our current home on the market, to going to



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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

THE LONG WAY HOME

THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

Jamaica!

Oh, wow, did we have a great time! We went back to the Jamaica Inn, in Ocho Rios, where we go every year (you see, stability...)

Partly because it is so beautiful and peaceful and familiar, but increasingly because the staff is so kind. To a person they'd come over and spend time not just with me, but with Michael. Treating him as an honoured guest and not as a hole in the room, as often happens with people with dementia.

We were joined by Michael's sons, Mike and Victor, and our great friend Rosemary who flew over from the UK to be with us.

Oh, I wish I could describe how wonderful it was. Ten days without worries, without responsibilities. Where we could set our own agenda. Bliss. And the mangos were in season!!! If crack cocaine was a fruit, it would be fresh Jamaican mangos. I think I have one lodged in my nostril even now.

WRITING THE NEXT GAMACHE NOVEL

May also saw the start of a new Gamache novel. As I believe I mentioned in my last letter, when starting to write a new book, I set a low word-count at first and build up to 1,000 words a day. This was the first time I tried to write in a place so very distracting (though I have written in London, and that has a few distractions too).

I quickly established a routine, setting the alarm for 6am, getting two cups of strong Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee, and writing for 3 hours before getting Michael up. After that it was breakfast, beach, swimming, lounging.

Ahhhhh.

We're back home now and the lilac are in bloom, the peony are still tight bulbs but promising to open this month. The tulips are up, the asparagus is out. This is pretty close to Heaven too. If there were only mangos among the lilac it would be perfect!

BOOK NEWS

May was a very fun month professionally too.

We heard that THE LONG WAY HOME has been nominated for an Anthony Award for Best Crime Novel in the US.

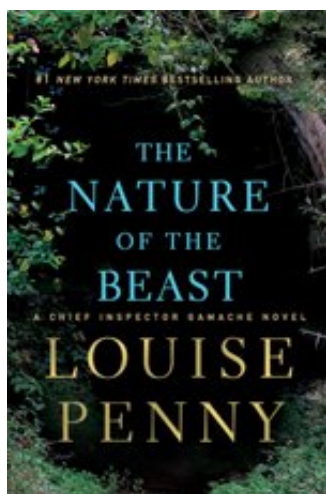
As I'm sure you're sick of hearing by now, but I'll repeat it anyway, the next Gamache novel, THE NATURE OF THE BEAST is coming out on August 25th. Many of the Advance Readers Copies, or ARCs, have gone out to reviewers and the early buzz is amazing. It's been named in USA Today's round up of the top 25 books of the summer! [Here's the link.](#)

In addition, Booklist online has just published their top 101 books of the decade and 6 Gamache books make it! [click here](#) to see the full list.

JULY

July is generally a quiet month for us. The big event is personal. Our niece, Sarah, is getting married to Ryan. The wedding will be in Edmonton and Uncle Michael and Auntie Louise are ecstatic and can't wait!! Another event that is also great fun in July is the Arts Alive Festival in Knowlton. There'll be a special Three Pines bistro event with brunch, enacted readings from the Gamache books, a quiz, and the prize is an advance copy of THE NATURE OF THE BEAST! For more information, [click here.](#)

FIRST CHAPTER OF THE NATURE OF THE BEAST



August 25th

The release day for THE NATURE OF THE BEAST is fast approaching!. I can hardly wait!!! Last year at this time I was describing writing it. And now it is just a couple months away from being in your hands.

By way of thanking you for all your support, your loyalty to Armand and Gabri and Clara and Jean-Guy et al, the US publisher has said I can share with you the first chapter of THE NATURE OF THE BEAST.

[Here's the link](#)

INSPIRING BOOK LOCATIONS

The other fun thing we're doing, and you might already know about this, is a series called The Real Places of Three Pines. Every two weeks over on [Facebook](#) I unveil an actual location that has inspired a setting for the books. These are places where Michael and I live, places we visit, places we love.

It is also, as you'll see if you read about them, such a pleasure to be able to tell you about local shops,

local people, local community places, and frankly, to promote them. The villages here have been so supportive of the Three Pines books, it is extremely meaningful to give some of that support back, by celebrating them. Here's the link www.gamacheseries.com.

AUDIO BOOK

Many of you are, understandably, concerned about who will take over the duties from our great friend, Ralph Cosham. It is taking a bit of time to find someone who is right for the role. It is safe to say no one will replace Ralph, they will simply build on what he has created, while at the same time making it their own. It is also safe to say I would rather have no audio book than a poor one. So we keep looking. As soon as I have news, I'll let you know. Wish I could do the reading, but I am terrible at dialogue. Every character sounds the same, and they all sound like me. Very confusing.

BOOK TOUR

With THE NATURE OF THE BEAST coming out in August, we're just putting the final touches on the book tour. It will be shorter than in the past, and will include some new places. Further details will be posted on the [website](#) as we get them.

If you could continue to tell others about the Gamache books, that would be wonderful.

Here is the tour information we have so far . . .

Saturday, August 22 – 2pm Brome Lake, Quebec – Brome Lake Books – location TBC

Monday, August 23 – Vancouver – Vancouver Writers Festival

Tuesday, August 25 - Seattle, WA - 7pm University Bookstore (at University Temple) – ticketed event

Wednesday, August 26 - Corte Madera, CA - 7pm Book Passage – ticketed event

Thursday, August 27 - Menlo Park, CA - 7.30pm Kepler's – ticketed event

Friday, August 28 - Pittsburgh, PA - 7pm Pittsburgh Arts and Lectures (Carnegie Lecture Hall) – ticketed event

Saturday, August 29 - Youngstown, OH - 6pm Literary Society Author Event, Main Library of the Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County

Sunday, August 30 - Washington DC - 3pm Politics and Prose (at Willard Hotel) – ticketed event

Monday, August 31 - Pittsboro, NC - 6.30pm McIntyre's – ticketed event

Tuesday, September 1 - 7pm Raleigh, NC - Quail Ridge Bookstore (at Meredith Chapel) – ticketed event

Wednesday, September 2 - New York, NY - 7pm Barnes and Noble, Union Square – free and open to the public

MICHAEL'S BOOKMARK

Michael is doing very well. The dementia is progressing of course, but he continues to be happy and easy going, smiling all the time. He adores Bishop and absolutely loved Jamaica. While he doesn't say much anymore, and now often forgets my name, he clearly knows who I am and who others are. Just the names slip beyond his grasp. But no one worries about that.

It became obvious a few months ago that his reading was deteriorating, so when he came to the end of one book, I would carefully select the next, in case it was the last one he, a voracious reader all his life, ever read. At first I thought they should be weighty tomes about the meaning of life. Something inspiring.

Then I thought, oh, sod it. Let's just make it fun. Something he would choose for himself and love to read, if he had all the time in the world.

Finally the time came and I knew it really would be the last book. I thought about it and honestly would have given him *THE NATURE OF THE BEAST* had it been finished. But instead I gave him a book I knew he'd love. A book I knew he'd choose for himself. A Michael Connelly.

And he did love it. Took him a very long time to read it, but he got to the end.

The bookmark is still in it, right at the last page. Funny, isn't it, how life really does imitate art.



THE NATURE OF THE BEAST will be the first Gamache novel Michael hasn't read. I began to read it out loud to him, but he lost interest. Probably because all the characters sounded the same. It was, of course, painful, to lower the book and know that was it. But then I remembered the Serenity Prayer, and repeated it a few times, and it got better.

And so we move forward. Not always, it must be admitted, with courage and wisdom. It is often kicking and screaming, after trying every other door and banging my fist and head.

It isn't always pretty, but we get there.

Thank you, dear friend, for holding our hands, as we hold yours. Thank you for your company. It is, at the end of each day, a peaceful, often genuinely happy time. And there is calm that comes with simplicity.

Hope this finds you well....and wise.Thank you for your company and your support.

Louise, Michael and Bishop

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