

September 2026 JTRAG Book List

Prepared & written by: Kip Ip
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- **Access:** ("[September 2026 Book List Link URL](#)") : Shared in the monthly JTRAG E-News.



QR Code Book List

- **Scope:** Practical, widely available resources that support learning, reflection, and group discussion. Updated monthly.
- **Contact:** If you have any questions about this book list, please contact the Library Reading Coordinator, Kip Ip (kip.ip@queensu.ca).
- **September focus note:** This September list supports John Olthuis's Kingston visit from September 24 to 29, 2026. It also marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day on September 30. The two Books of the Month connect Indigenous truth-telling with structural change.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH (September 2026)

1. Unreconciled: Family, Truth, and Indigenous Resistance (2021)

- **Author:** Jesse Wenté, member of the Serpent River First Nation, writer, broadcaster, and arts leader.
- **Publication:** Allen Lane, 2021.
- **Synopsis:** Part memoir and part manifesto, Wenté links family history and his grandmother's residential-school experience with racism, media, museums, and Indigenous resistance. He argues that truth must come before reconciliation. Inclusion cannot repair colonial relations when power stays in the same hands.

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- **Group Discussion:** Discuss what changes when truth comes before national comfort. Which stories about Canada and Indigenous peoples should churches, libraries, and media stop repeating?
- **Rationale:** Selected as the 1st Book of the Month because it is clear, personal, and grounded in Indigenous experience. It asks readers to place truth before comfort and to consider how public institutions must change.
- **How to access:** Open the Penguin Random House Canada page, or search your library catalogue and Canadian booksellers.
- **Note:** This book is also listed below in Adults, C6. Land and Activism.
- **URL:** <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/575553/unreconciled-by-jesse-wente/9780735235731>

2. On Dismantling Settler Colonialism: An Insider's Perspective on Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples (2025)

- **Author:** John A. Olthuis, founding partner and Senior Counsel at OKT | Olthuis Kleer Townshend LLP, Member of the Order of Canada, and long-time Indigenous rights lawyer.
- **Publication:** University of Toronto Press, 2025. UTP Insights series.
- **Synopsis:** Olthuis argues that reconciliation cannot leave assimilation and settler control in place. He calls for the return of land and resources, respect for Indigenous jurisdiction, and practical implementation of UNDRIP. Indigenous nations need space to govern themselves by their own laws and values.

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- **Companion Reading:** The complete three-part series Triple Portrait of John A. Olthuis follows his legal work, land cases, and wider call for structural change. Open the link or scan the QR code to read Parts 1 to 3.

- **URL:** <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1-U8xQ6hu3rCQEzEA2LZtfyBk8jU4A-AI?usp=sharing>



QR Code Complete 3-
Part Set

- **Group Discussion:** During and after John Olthuis's visit, identify one change that would shift power in a church, school, public institution, or community. Assign responsibility and set a review date.
- **Rationale:** Selected as the 2nd Book of the Month because John Olthuis will visit Kingston from September 24 to 29, 2026. The book can guide questions before the visit and action afterward.
- **How to access:** Open the University of Toronto Press page, or search your library catalogue and Canadian booksellers.
- **URL:** <https://utpdistribution.com/9781487569228/on-dismantling-settler-colonialism/>
- **Note:** This is the sole intentional cross-month repeat. It is also listed below in Adults, C1. History, Truth, and Reconciliation.
- **Please access URL (2026 September JTRAG News and Resources):**
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1obaw-fgtGP-7zEiDV5WucNLzaFHXsrMN?usp=sharing>

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CHILDREN

Little Shoes (2025)

- **Author:** David A. Robertson, member of Norway House Cree Nation, illustrated by Maya McKibbin, a Two-Spirit Ojibwe, Yoeme, and Irish-settler artist.
- **Publication:** Tundra Books, 2025. Picture book for ages 3 to 7.
- **Synopsis:** James joins his kokom on a memorial march. He sees teddy bears, flowers, tobacco ties, and little shoes for children who did not return from residential school. When he learns that kokom's sister was one of them, his mother helps him carry the grief.
- **Group Discussion:** Discuss why children need truth and caring support together. Ask what the objects at a memorial help people remember.
- **How to access:** Open the Penguin Random House Canada page or search your library catalogue.
- **URL:** <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/713017/little-shoes-by-david-a-robertson-illustrated-by-maya-mckibbin/9781774881729>

Miya Wears Orange (2025)

- **Author:** Wanda John-Kehewin, Plains Cree writer, illustrated by Erika Rodriguez Medina.
- **Publication:** HighWater Press, 2025. Picture book for ages 6 to 8.
- **Synopsis:** Miya hears a story about a girl who was taken to residential school. She fears that this could still happen. Her mother reassures her and explains why wearing orange honours the children and Survivors.

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- **Group Discussion:** Discuss how adults can share difficult history without leaving children alone with fear. Ask what an orange shirt should lead people to remember and do.
- **How to access:** Open the Portage & Main Press or HighWater Press page, or search your library catalogue.
- **URL:** <https://www.portageandmainpress.com/Books/M/Miya-Wears-Orange>

TEENS

Righting Canada's Wrongs: Residential Schools (2nd edition, 2022)

- **Author:** Melanie Florence, Cree writer and author of books for young people.
- **Publication:** James Lorimer & Company, 2nd edition, 2022. Young adult nonfiction for ages 13 to 18.
- **Synopsis:** Historical photographs, documents, and first-person accounts explain the residential-school system and the work of Survivors who sought justice. The updated edition also addresses unmarked graves and the Calls to Action that remain unfinished.
- **Group Discussion:** Choose one photograph, document, or Survivor account. What does it show about government and church responsibility, Indigenous resistance, and the work still required?
- **How to access:** Open the Lorimer publisher page or search your library catalogue.
- **URL:** <https://lorimer.ca/childrens/product/righting-canadas-wrongs-residential-schools-2/>

Hopeless in Hope (2023)

- **Author:** Wanda John-Kehewin, Cree writer from Kehewin Cree Nation.
- **Publication:** HighWater Press, 2023. Young adult novel for ages 12 and up.

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- **Synopsis:** Fourteen-year-old Eva lives with her mother's addiction and fears losing her family. Her brother enters foster care, and Eva enters a group home. Her nohkum and her mother's diary help her face family truth, forgiveness, and hope.
- **Group Discussion:** Discuss how child welfare, poverty, addiction, and intergenerational harm shape Eva's choices. What support helps a young person keep family, culture, and self-respect in view?
- **How to access:** Open the University of Toronto Press distribution page or search your library catalogue.
- **URL:** <https://utpdistribution.com/9781774920831/hopeless-in-hope/>

ADULTS

C1. History, Truth, and Reconciliation

On Dismantling Settler Colonialism: An Insider's Perspective on Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples (2025)

- **Note:** See the 2nd Book of the Month above for the full entry.
- **URL:** <https://utpdistribution.com/9781487569228/on-dismantling-settler-colonialism/>

Behind the Bricks: The Life and Times of the Mohawk Institute, Canada's Longest-Running Residential School (2025)

- **Editors:** Richard W. Hill Sr., Alison Norman, Thomas Peace, and Jennifer Pettit.
- **Publication:** University of Calgary Press, 2025.
- **Synopsis:** This community-guided history examines the Mohawk Institute in Brantford through Survivor accounts, oral history, records, archaeology, architecture, photographs,

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and changing historical contexts. Its chapters address student life, labour, religion, food, resistance, and the school's wider place in the residential-school system.

- **Group Discussion:** Discuss what becomes visible when community knowledge, oral history, archives, and material evidence are read together. Ask what local institutions owe Survivors and descendants.
- **How to access:** Read the open-access edition or use the University of Calgary Press page.
- **URL:** <https://press.ucalgary.ca/books/9781773856520/>

C2. Fiction

The Theory of Crows: A Novel (2022)

- **Author:** David A. Robertson, member of Norway House Cree Nation.
- **Publication:** HarperCollins Publishers, 2022.
- **Synopsis:** A Cree father and his estranged teenage daughter return to the family trapline after years of distance and grief. The land brings family memory, intergenerational trauma, and a chance to rebuild trust.
- **Group Discussion:** Discuss what the land offers Matthew and Holly that ordinary conversation could not. How does the novel join family repair with cultural and territorial belonging?
- **How to access:** Open the HarperCollins Canada page or search your library catalogue.
- **URL:** <https://www.harpercollins.ca/9781443465168/the-theory-of-crows/>

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Kiss of the Fur Queen (first published 1998; Penguin Modern Classics edition 2021)

- **Author:** Tomson Highway, Cree writer, playwright, and musician from Barren Lands First Nation.
- **Publication:** Doubleday Canada, 1998; Penguin Canada, 2021 edition.
- **Synopsis:** Two Cree brothers are taken from northern Manitoba to a Catholic residential school. The school strips away their names, language, and safety. As adults, music, dance, language, and the trickster Fur Queen help them resist erasure and seek their own lives.
- **Group Discussion:** Discuss how art, language, humour, and the trickster carry survival. The novel includes sexual abuse and other difficult material. Plan adult support and time for reflection.
- **How to access:** Open the Penguin Random House Canada page or search your library catalogue.
- **URL:** <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/79881/kiss-of-the-fur-queen-by-tomson-highway/9780385697217>

C3. Biography and Memoir

Call Me Indian: From the Trauma of Residential School to Becoming the NHL's First Treaty Indigenous Player (2021)

- **Author:** Fred Sasakamoose with Meg Masters; foreword by Bryan Trottier.
- **Publication:** Viking Canada, 2021.

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- **Synopsis:** Sasakamoose recounts residential school, his path to becoming the NHL's first Treaty Indigenous player, and his return home. The memoir centres survival, identity, family, leadership, and service to Indigenous youth.
- **Group Discussion:** Discuss how public achievement can hide private and institutional harm. What does Sasakamoose's return to community teach about leadership after trauma?
- **How to access:** Open the Penguin Random House Canada page or search your library catalogue.
- **URL:** <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/634085/call-me-indian-by-fred-sasakamoose-with-foreword-by-bryan-trottier/9780735240018>

Up Ghost River: A Chief's Journey Through the Turbulent Waters of Native History (2014)

- **Author:** Edmund Metatawabin, former Chief of Fort Albany First Nation, with Alexandra Shimo.
- **Publication:** Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2014.
- **Synopsis:** Metatawabin recounts abuse at St. Anne's Residential School, its effects on his life, and his later struggle for records and accountability. He also describes a return to Cree knowledge, land, family, humour, and community healing.
- **Group Discussion:** Discuss what institutional truth-telling required from Survivors. Why do access to records, cultural knowledge, and community control all matter to healing?
- **How to access:** Open the Penguin Random House Canada page or search your library catalogue.

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- **URL:** <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/227773/up-ghost-river-by-edmund-metatawabin--with-alexandra-shimo/9780307399885>

C4. Faith and Reflection

In This Together: Fifteen Stories of Truth and Reconciliation (2016)

- **Editor:** Danielle Metcalfe-Chenail.
- **Publication:** Brindle & Glass, 2016.
- **Synopsis:** Indigenous and non-Indigenous contributors describe moments when they faced colonization, racism, and their own assumptions. The essays join honest self-examination with public responsibility.
- **Group Discussion:** Read one essay by an Indigenous writer and one by a settler writer.
Discuss how their responsibilities differ, where they meet, and what each asks of the reader.
- **How to access:** Open the TouchWood Editions page or search your library catalogue.
- **URL:** <https://touchwoodeditions.com/products/in-this-together>

The Power of Story: On Truth, the Trickster, and New Fictions for a New Era (2022)

- **Author:** Harold R. Johnson, member of Montreal Lake Cree Nation.
- **Publication:** Biblioasis, 2022.
- **Synopsis:** Johnson explains how stories shape identity, history, law, and social relationships. He asks readers to recognize harmful stories and to create more truthful and compassionate ones.
- **Group Discussion:** What stories do churches tell about Canada, Indigenous peoples, and themselves? Which should be retired, corrected, or replaced?

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- **How to access:** Open the Biblioasis page for print, ebook, or audiobook, or search your library catalogue.
- **URL:** <https://www.biblioasis.com/shop/new-releases/the-power-of-story/>

C5. Poetry

Blue Marrow (redesigned edition, 2020; first published 1998)

- **Author:** Louise Bernice Halfe - Sky Dancer, nêhiyaw poet and former Parliamentary Poet Laureate.
- **Publication:** Kegedonce Press, redesigned edition, 2020.
- **Synopsis:** Grandmothers speak across past and present in English and Cree. The poems confront colonialism, missionary violence, and residential schools. They also carry women's strength, memory, hope, and survivance.
- **Group Discussion:** Read two poems aloud and leave time for silence. Discuss what voice, repetition, and Cree language carry that prose cannot.
- **How to access:** Open the Kegedonce Press page or search your library catalogue.
- **URL:** <https://kegedonce.com/books/blue-marrow/>

The Pemmican Eaters (2015)

- **Author:** Marilyn Dumont, Métis poet of Cree and Métis ancestry.
- **Publication:** ECW Press, 2015.
- **Synopsis:** Dumont revisits the Riel Resistance, Batoche, Gabriel and Madeleine Dumont, Louis Riel, bison, beadwork, the Red River Cart, and Michif. The poems honour Métis memory and challenge textbook history.

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- **Group Discussion:** Choose one poem about an event the group thinks it knows. Discuss what changes when the story comes from Métis memory rather than a textbook.
- **How to access:** Open the ECW Press page or search your library catalogue.
- **URL:** <https://ecwpress.com/products/pemmican-eaters>

C6. Land and Activism

Unreconciled: Family, Truth, and Indigenous Resistance (2021)

- **Note:** See the 1st Book of the Month above for the full entry.
- **URL:** <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/575553/unreconciled-by-jesse-wente/9780735235731>

Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-Up Call (first published 2015; second edition 2021)

- **Authors:** Arthur Manuel, Secwepemc leader from Neskonlith, and Grand Chief Ronald M. Derrickson of Westbank First Nation; foreword by Naomi Klein.
- **Publication:** Between the Lines, first edition 2015; second edition 2021.
- **Synopsis:** Manuel and Derrickson connect Indigenous land title, economics, political organizing, and international advocacy. They argue that real reconciliation must address land, jurisdiction, and material power.
- **Group Discussion:** Discuss what it means that reconciliation has an economic and territorial cost. Identify one local land question the group should study before speaking on it.
- **How to access:** Open the Between the Lines page for print, ebook, or audiobook, or search your library catalogue.
- **URL:** <https://btlbooks.com/book/unsettling-canada-second-edition>

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C7. Indigenous Spirituality

Aki-wayn-zih: A Person as Worthy as the Earth (2021)

- **Author:** Eli Baxter, fluent Anishinaabamowin speaker, knowledge keeper, educator, and residential-school Survivor.
- **Publication:** McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021.
- **Synopsis:** Baxter writes about the spiritual relationship between the land and the Anishinaabamowin. He also writes about language, law, family life in Treaty 9 territory, and residential school. Traditional stories and lived knowledge guide the book.
- **Group Discussion:** Discuss why language, land, knowledge, law, and spirituality cannot be separated. What responsibilities do readers have when teachings are shared across cultures?
- **How to access:** Open the McGill-Queen's University Press page or search your library catalogue.
- **URL:** <https://www.mqup.ca/aki-wayn-zih-products-9780228008071.php>

Dreamfast: A Trail of Stories to Lead You Home (2018)

- **Author:** Elizabeth Doxtater, Six Nations artist, storyteller, educator, and writer.
- **Publication:** Self-published by Elizabeth Doxtater, 2018.
- **Synopsis:** Short stories and images form a trail of welcome for people taken from their communities as children and for adults seeking a way home. The collection carries Haudenosaunee history, land, family, treaties, clans, Mush Hole, and the promise of welcome.
- **Group Discussion:** Discuss what it means to make welcome a community responsibility. How can story connect people to home without simplifying why they were separated?

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- **How to access:** Search WorldCat by ISBN or ask a library to locate the title.
- **URL:** <https://search.worldcat.org/search?q=9780995824416>

C8. Faith-Based Resources

Honouring the Declaration: Church Commitments to Reconciliation and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2021)

- **Editors:** Don Schweitzer and Paul L. Gareau.
- **Publication:** University of Regina Press, 2021.
- **Synopsis:** Indigenous and non-Indigenous contributors examine how The United Church of Canada and other denominations can put UNDRIP commitments into practice. The essays address Indigenous law, theology, ethics, education, activism, and institutional change.
- **Group Discussion:** Choose one UNDRIP commitment that speaks to church life. What policy, budget, education, governance, or relationship change would put it into practice?
- **How to access:** Open the publisher page or search your library catalogue.
- **URL:** <https://nyupress.org/9780889778320/honouring-the-declaration/>

The Journey Presses On: Pope Francis's Apology to Residential School Survivors in Canada (2026)

- **Editors:** Doris M. Kieser and Jane Barter.
- **Publication:** McGill-Queen's University Press, 2026. Available September 15, 2026.
- **Synopsis:** Seven essays examine Pope Francis's 2022 apology, its meaning, limits, reception, and institutional aftermath. The collection considers the Doctrine of Discovery, colonial structures, symbolic repentance, and material justice.

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- **Group Discussion:** Discuss what an apology can accomplish and what it cannot do alone.
What material actions should follow repentance in a church institution?
- **How to access:** Open the publisher-distributor page. Pre-order before September 15, 2026, or search your library catalogue after publication.
- **URL:** <https://utpdistribution.com/9780228028963/the-journey-presses-on/>

C9. Watch and Listen

Film: Holy Angels (2017)

- **Writer and Director:** Jay Cardinal Villeneuve; featuring Lena Wandering Spirit and Phoenix Alec.
- **Publication:** National Film Board of Canada, 2017. Short documentary, 13 minutes.
- **Synopsis:** The film returns to Lena Wandering Spirit's removal to residential school in 1963. Impressionistic images and a child's fragmented language hold colonial violence beside resilience, healing, and coming home.
- **Group Discussion:** Discuss how the film's visual form changes the way viewers listen.
What does it mean to remember harm while also recognizing healing and return?
- **Content Note:** The film includes descriptions of physical abuse. The NFB recommends it for ages 14 to 18. Allow quiet time after viewing.
- **How to access:** Open the National Film Board page for viewing and licensing options.
- **URL:** <https://www.nfb.ca/film/holy-angels/>

Film: Stories Are in Our Bones (2019)

- **Writer and Director:** Janine Windolph, Woodland Cree filmmaker.
- **Publication:** National Film Board of Canada, 2019. Short documentary, 11 minutes.

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- **Synopsis:** Windolph takes her city-raised sons fishing with their kokum, a residential-school Survivor with deep knowledge of the land. Their return becomes a family healing journey and an act of cultural resistance.
- **Group Discussion:** Discuss how food, land, memory, and family practice carry knowledge between generations. What forms of resistance may look ordinary from the outside?
- **How to access:** Open the National Film Board page for viewing and licensing options.
- **URL:** <https://www.nfb.ca/film/stories-are-in-our-bones/>