

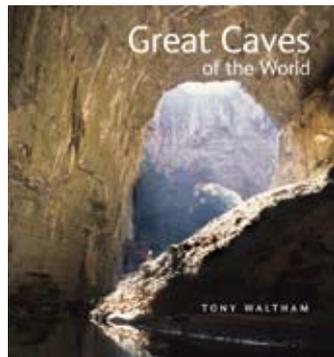
Book Views for December

Great Caves of the World

by Tony Waltham

One Canadian cave appears in this book, Castleguard Cave of B.C. The only safe time to visit it is in winter when meltwater stops flowing through it. Large, with varying and difficult passages, it takes at least **three days of caving to make a return trip** to the end.

Sterkfontein Cave of South Af-



rica is one of a few caves west of Johannesburg that have been called “the Cradle of Humankind” for being the site of one third of the world’s known fossils of the **ancestors of humans**. The bones are thought to have been dropped by carnivores

around the open cave shafts, meaning that these early upright hominids probably came to a violent end.

Kentucky is home to Mammoth Cave, at nearly 370 miles, the **longest cave system in the world**. The passages are layered on four main levels, each one younger than the one above. The oldest, highest levels are at least 2.3 to 3.5 million years old.

The book contains many full-page, full-colour photographs of people exploring the caves, which provides needed perspectives to show the massive size of these underground environments. Some scenes look like they may have been shot on other planets.

Cavers are sure to feel restless when studying the book, but **anyone will be impressed by it**. GH

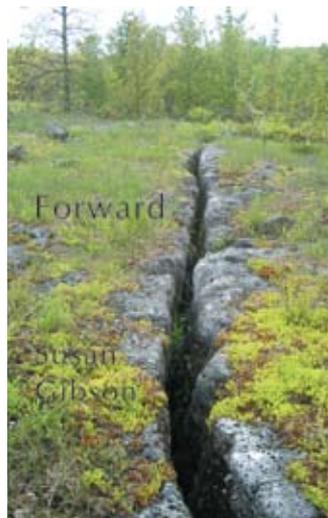
Firefly Books, 2008, hardcover, \$29.95

Forward

By Susan Gibson

With great force, Susan Gibson weaves her words through the his-

tory and the future of Ontario’s landscape. Born in Toronto, this poet fled the city in the late ’80s in search of her next “earthy adventure.” Gibson spent the next **20 years in Grey-Bruce counties** where she watched the full moon “hold



hands with the shy, night air,” and waited for “great drifting songs rising from limestone cliffs.” Over her time there she developed a distinct voice for herself as a Canadian poet.

Gibson crafts her poetry into two sections using mostly free verse. The first section, “Georgian Bay,” explores the necessity of reflection as well as **reverence for our natural world**. Here, Gibson’s curiosity for all life forms becomes immediately evident, from her admiration of the ant’s communal wisdom to the healing arms of an evergreen.

The second section, “Community,” examines the many layers of communal membership, be it family, friends, situational, or otherwise. Gibson details the events of a **communal battle against Niagara Escarpment land developers** (which she won!) and reveals memories of fiery women and personal victories. Using Ontario’s natural environment as a backdrop, Gibson discovers how belonging can often be as challenging as it is rewarding.

At a time when the environment has simply become a term that is riddled with pessimism, Gibson gives us a gentle reminder of our “rolling hills” and “enduring escarp-

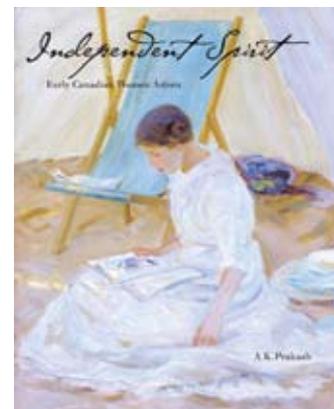
By Johanna Bailey & Gloria Hildebrandt

ment.” *Forward* is a quick and lovely read with thoughtful insight about “This, our only land.” JB

The Ginger Press, 2008, softcover, \$13.95

Independent Spirit: Early Canadian Women Artists

By A.K. Prakash



What **a wonderful book**. An oversized full-colour collection of some of the work of women artists from 1834 to the present, this is both a useful reference and an entertaining book to browse and read through.

While some of the artists, Maud Lewis, Paraskeva Clark and of course Emily Carr may be familiar, many more are likely to be unknown by most people. This volume may change that. Colour plates of the works, many from private collections, introduce us to **the wealth of talent Canada can claim**.

Notes by A.K. Prakash, a prestigious art advisor and consultant, highlight each artist’s career and explains what to appreciate in each featured work.

In addition, a separate section of the book summarizes the lives of each artist and includes quotations by or about them. Of particular delight is a remark by Ethel Seath, who lived from 1879 to 1963: **“Don’t be shy, fill the pages, make a mess.”**

Artists, collectors and those who enjoy paintings and sculpture will treasure this book. GH

Firefly Books, 2008, hardcover, \$75.00



Subscribe to 4 issues of *Escarpment Views*!

name _____

address _____

city _____ postal code _____

phone number _____

email address _____

Where did you get this copy of *Escarpment Views*? _____

Mail a cheque for \$21.00, which includes GST, to:

Escarpment Views

50 Ann St., Georgetown, ON L7G 2V2.

Subscriptions to the U.S.: \$30 (GST included)

Escarpment Views does not sell, trade or share its mailing list.