

All Those Drawn to Me: Stories

Christian Petersen

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The junction of Highways 20 and 97 forms a rough right angle around which lies the city of Williams Lake. These are the coordinates by which Christian Petersen's fiction can be charted. From the building of the Gaol at Soda Creek to ruminations on the origins of the Barkerville fire, All Those Drawn to Me explores the unpredictable, romantic and spiritual qualities of life in rural BC. The harshness of the wild west permeates Petersen's second collection of short fiction. In the story "Horse from Persia," a condemned man contemplates the injustice of life at his hanging speech: "I wished mightily that I could climb up on that horse and escape the sorrowful puzzle my days had become. For if it's true time is a gift, mine was not altogether pleasant." But Petersen is just as comfortable extrapolating truths from present-day life, as in "Laketown Breakdown" where a young man struggles to stay on the right side of the law while coping with the death of his parents. And in the title story, "All Those Drawn to Me," Petersen creates a masterful blend, shifting from the gold rush to the contemporary with three motives, three lives and three battles with death on the treacherous waters of the Upper Quesnel River. Whether in the past or present, Petersen's characters explore romance, poverty and spiritual quandaries as they wander amid the landscape and back streets of the dusty little cities of BC's Central Interior.



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