

October 12, 2016

*Spotlight on Books:*

*Public Library and Other Stories* by Ali Smith

October is library month in Canada and we are currently devoting a central display area to celebrating libraries and the joy that can be found there. So many have written with passion and conviction about the uniquely inclusive and communal aspect of the free public library institution and one that I find particularly compelling is a quote by author Ursula K. Le Guin – “*If Librarians were honest, they would say, No one spends time here without being changed*”.

More inspiration can be found in this week’s review book by Scottish author Ali Smith. Smith believes that we are what we read and that we are defined by what we borrow and the wild and wonderful stories contained in *Public Library and Other Stories* reflect these convictions. Her stories grew out of concern about library closures in the United Kingdom – at the time of publication more than 1,000 had closed in the previous seven years though Ms. Smith, ever the wordsmith, slyly comments that the word used by authorities for this selling off of public space is “divest”.

The stories run the gamut from tales of relationship rifts, school-day memories and world travel but all roads lead to the celebration of words, books and the libraries that contain them. The references to other authors and works of literature that Smith includes are inspirational and lead the reader on to new discoveries. Between each story, the author includes a testimonial around the value of libraries lending urgency to her message about the peril they are in.

*Public Library and other stories* is an excellent book to pick up anytime but perhaps especially relevant during Canadian Library Month and for anyone who is dealing with library closure or reduction of services. Check it out from Yellowknife Public Library and while here please take some time to enjoy the serendipity of browsing our shelves. You never know what treasure you will find here!

- *Review prepared by Deborah Bruser, Library Manager*



**Ali Smith**  
**Public library**  
and other stories

'Brims with palpable joy' Daily Telegraph

AUTHOR OF HOW TO BE BOTH  
BAILEYS WOMEN'S PRIZE WINNER 2015

