A Short History of Writers and Artists Responding to L.M. Montgomery

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On Monday, 4 March 1901, L.M. Montgomery wrote in her diary about recently received letters:

Two of my letters were quite nice. One was from a certain Alfred Mason, who, it seems is an organist of Pittsfield, Mass., and who says he has taken a great fancy to those verses of mine “A Pair of Slippers” and wants my permission to publish them as a song with the music he had written for them. Oddly, enough, the other letter was similar in kind, being from a Miss Chadkins of Boston who wants to set “When the Fishing Boats Come In” to music. Of course I am pleasantly tickled. (*CJ* 2: 8)

***Some* Canadian writers who have responded to L.M. Montgomery:**

Margaret Atwood, Michel Bourque, Alan Bradley, Kat Cameron, Bliss Carman, Holly Cinnamon, Mary Frances Coady, Megan Gail Coles, Anne Compton, Lesley Crewe, Robertson Davies, Mo Duffy Cobb, Sarah Emsley, Elizabeth Epperly, Heather Fawcett, Melanie Fishbane, Carley Fortune, C.E. Gatchalian, Kallie George, Judith Graves, Kelly Hill, Polly Horvath, Bernice Thurman Hunter, Shari Green, Uzma Jalaluddin, Julie Johnston, Marianne Jones, Jane Ledwell, Jen Sookfong Lee, Benjamin Lefebvre, Catherine Little, Jean Little, Janet Lunn, Alexander MacLeod, Mariah Marsden, Carol Matas, Rachel McMillan, Louise Michalos, Lisa Moore, Alice Munro, Janette Oke, Heather O'Neill, Kenneth Oppel, P.K. Page, Kit Pearson, Julie Pellissier-Lush, Louise Penny, Sara Peters, Sarah Polley, Carol Shields, Robin Sutherland, Mariko Tamaki, Jane Urquhart, L.R. Wright, Tim Wynne-Jones, Elizabeth Waterston

Years before the publication of *Anne of Green Gables* in 1908, artists were responding to, and adapting, Montgomery's work. In her lifetime, Montgomery saw two Hollywood interpretations of *Anne of Green Gables* (1919, 1934) and one of *Anne of Windy Poplars* (1940), and she fielded multiple requests to option *The Blue Castle* (*CJ* 6: 119; *SJ* 5: 82). A former concert singer composed the song "The Wild White Cherry Tree," which "seemed to her [the composer] to express her feelings on reading *Anne*" (*CJ* 2: 291), while a fan letter from "a jubilant girl" shared that she had published a poem "inspired" by *Emily* (*SJ* 5: 274). Montgomery saw a school play

based on a section of *The Golden Road* (*CJ* 4: 214) and came across a reference to *Anne of Green Gables* in Nelia Gardner White's novel *The Fields of Gomorrah* (*SJ* 5: 50).

After Montgomery's death and into the twenty-first century, her profoundly generative[1] work continues to inspire and influence artists around the world and across genres. Mark Twain, Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro, Madeleine L'Engle, Astrid Lindgren, Louise Penny, and Aretha Franklin are just some of the illustrious writers and artists who have responded to Montgomery's work.[2]

Generations of Canadian writers—poets and writers of literary, romance, mystery, middle-grade, fantasy, and young adult fiction, as well as non-fiction: memoir, journalism, and nature writing—have been influenced by Montgomery, have commented on her work and legacy, and have not been able to ignore her as the "queen" of Canadian literature (*CJ* 5: 142).[3]

And Montgomery elicits responses from writers further afield, too. The list of writers who have read Montgomery, who have described their love of her work or her influence on them, who have incorporated her world into their own work, is long. It includes writers from nations and regions around the world:

- USA (Gwendolyn Brooks, Tracy Chevalier, Naima Coster, Elisabeth Egan, Amanda Gorman, Jasmine Guillory, Shannon Hale, Jenny Han, Kristin Hannah, Harper Lee, Laura Lippman, Stephenie Meyer, Ann Napolitano, Anne Rice, Liz Rosenberg, Sydney Taylor, Elizabeth Ebony Thomas, Calvin Trillin, Julie Sellers, J. Courtney Sullivan, Mindy Nichols Wendell, Evelyn White)
- England (Jo Callaghan, Lisa Jewell, Rosemary Sutcliff)
- Scotland (Jackie Kay)
- Sweden (Astrid Lindgren, Eva Ström)
- Finland (Vilja-Tuuli Huotarinen, Kaisa Ikola, Pia Ingström, Vappu Kannas, Satu Koskimies, Leena Lehtolainen, Irmelin Sandman Lilius, Minna Rytisalo, Lotta-Sofia Saahko, Pirkko Saisio, Rauha S. Virtanen)[4]
- Norway (Lise Männikkö)
- Poland (Maria Buyno-Arctowa, Wanda Chotomska, Sylwia Chutnik, Maria Dunin-Kozicka, Weronika Madryas, Kornel Makuszyński, Jarosław Mikołajewski, Weronika Murek, Małgorzata Musierowicz, Piotr Mitzner, Katarzyna Ryrych, Olga Tokarczuk, Barbara Wachowicz, Jerzy Wyszomirski, Helena Zakrzewska)
- Spain (Maria Isabel Sanchez Vegara)

- Japan (Saou Ichikawa, Yuko Matsumoto, Asako Yuzuki)
- Brazil (Camila Deus Dará, L. David, Edelweis Ritt)
- Australia (Colleen McCullough)
- Uruguay (Armonía Somers)
- Nigeria (Oyinkan Braithwaite)
- China (Zhou Guoping, Cao Wenxuan)[5]

***Some* artists who have responded to L.M. Montgomery:**

Visual artists: Olga Berezinskaya, Carolyn Epperly, Kallie George, Abigail Halpin, Myisha Haynes, Anne Kelly Hill, Elly MacKay, Doris McCarthy, Mary Pratt, Maria Ryazantseva, Brianna Thummler, Anne Woster

Television writers and creators: Moira Walley-Beckett (*Breaking Bad*, *Anne with an "E"*), Akiko Kumai and Kaho Nashiki (*Anne* anime, 1979), Allison Silverman (*Russian Doll*)

Musicians: The East Pointers (hosts of the #Annedemic, a COVID-19 group read-along). Many musical creators, lyricists, and composers (*Anne of Green Gables—The Musical's*™ Don Harron, Norman Campbell, Elaine Campbell, and Mavor Moore; *Anne of Green Gables: A New Musical*'s Matte O'Brien and Matt Vinson; an Austrian *Anne* musical, adapted by Norbert Holoubek, with music by Norberto Bertassi). Maija Vilkumaa (Finnish rock singer singing about Anne and Diana in the song "Ei saa surettaa" ["Don't be sad"] about friendship)

Textile artists: creators featured in the 2024 travelling exhibit "Kindred Spirits: The Lucy Maud Montgomery Legacy as Interpreted by Contemporary Book Artists"

Sculptors: Grace Curtis, Claude Roussel, Terry Dunton Stevenson, Wynn Walters

Performing artists: ballerina Hannah Mae Cruddas (*Anne of Green Gables—The*

Montgomery, the writer, has had a particularly profound impact on other writers; however, painters, illustrators, composers, musicians, actors, costume designers, dancers, textile artists, and creators of film, TV, and new media have also engaged with her legacy.

Montgomery's Japanese legacy points to the creative fecundity of her life and works. The first translation of *Anne of Green Gables* by Hanako Muraoka appeared in 1952, leading to a popular 1979 *Anne of Green Gables* anime production—and a forthcoming one announced in 2024, not to mention a Japanese-language production of *Anne of Green Gables: The Musical*™.6 The fascinating story of Muraoka's translation—which she worked on while Canada and Japan were Second World War enemies and as Allied bombs fell on Tokyo—is told by her granddaughter, Eri Muraoka, in *Anne's Cradle: The Life and Works of Hanako Muraoka, Japanese Translator of* Anne of Green Gables. This personal, and international, story will soon be reimagined as a musical ("Playwright Carolyn Nakagawa").

Montgomery's artistry keeps on giving.

In this essay, I'd like to show the depth and breadth of Montgomery's creative legacy—across artists' various backgrounds and across media, genres, and styles. I am also sharing my exploration—my watching, listening, and reading—of Montgomery spinoffs, homages, critiques, and reimaginings, and I hope that you will find something new here to add to your TBR (to be read [or watched or listened to] list). There are writers and artists here who may inspire further creativity, scholarship, and responses. Finally, I want to showcase that my co-editor Liz Rosenberg and the writers and artists of many stripes in this *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies* special collection are adding yet more subtlety and variety to the existing body of robust, sometimes conflicting, literary and artistic responses to Montgomery.

Montgomery's life and works are reimagined and reverberate through other writers' and artists' works in an astounding variety of ways, which I'm categorizing here as follows:

- **Commentary** (commenting on Montgomery in interviews, reviews, essays)
- **Adaptation** (reimagining Montgomery's books in a variety of art forms: TV, film, new media, other books)

- **Interpretation** (reimagining Montgomery's books more loosely—that is, plot, character, and/or setting are significantly changed; more homage than adaptation)
- **Extension** (exploring characters' lives before or after we meet them in Montgomery's books)
- **Portrait** (imagining Montgomery's own life)
- **Encounter** (having fictional characters meet Montgomery)
- **Self-portrait** (reading the writer's/artist's self through Montgomery's life or works)
- **Guidance** (providing life or artistic direction to others through Montgomery's life/works)
- **Icon** (building a work around iconic symbols, phrases, or characters created by Montgomery)
- **Embedment** (embedding/inserting Montgomery's books into one's own work of art as books to be read, plot devices, reflections of character growth, etc.)
- **Reference** (inserting brief reference[s] to Montgomery or her works)
- **Allusion** (indirectly referencing Montgomery or her works)
- **Humour** (engaging with Montgomery's work, life, or world through humour: parody, satire, etc.)
- **Resonance** (identifying echoes of Montgomery's life or works in texts not explicitly connected to her)

Commentary: Many of the artists and writers already mentioned—such as Twain, Franklin, and Atwood—have responded to Montgomery's work in reviews, personal correspondence, interviews, or essays. These commentaries signal writers' and artists' appreciation of her artistry, place her in a literary tradition, describe her influence on their own development as artists, offer literary insights and analysis, critique (even criticize) her writing or world view, find comfort in her world, or express a desire for more Montgomery (for example, wanting to make a pilgrimage to PEI).

Do you want to know what some of these writers and artists had to say about Montgomery and her work? Stay connected, because we'll be sharing quotations on the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery* website and L.M. Montgomery Institute social media.

Adaptation: Like other classics—*Romeo and Juliet*, *Frankenstein*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Dracula*—there seems to be an *Anne of Green Gables* for every generation, not to mention for many places and cultures. English-language film and TV adaptations of this novel appeared in 1919, 1934, 1956, 1972, 1979, 1985, 1987, 2000, 2001, 2008, 2016, and 2017–2019. Many scholars, readers, future writers, and fans—myself included—came to this story through Sullivan Entertainment's 1980s adaptation starring Megan Follows as Anne. The CBC/Netflix series *Anne with an "E"* (2017–2019) is also beloved: its cancellation resulted in a petition with 1.7 million (and counting) signatures demanding a continuation of the story ("Renew Anne!").7 On the strength of the show's popularity in Brazil, between 2017 and 2024, there were twenty-eight editions of *Anne of Green Gables* published in Brazilian Portuguese (dos Santos and Ferreira, "Montgomery").

Anne of Green Gables is adapted into many media and genres. This is a fitting tribute to Montgomery, an artist whose creativity was expressed in writing, photography, multimedia collage/scrapbooking, the domestic arts, and handiwork; and who consumed the arts of all kinds—the written word and visual arts, movies, and music. You can watch *Anne of Green Gables—The Musical*™ every second summer in Charlottetown, PEI, at the Confederation Centre of the Arts (where it has been playing since 1965, annually until the COVID-19 pandemic), which in turn inspired *Anne of Green Gables—The Ballet*®. There's also the musical *Anne and Gilbert* (annually in the summer in Charlottetown). A recent example of an international production, *Very Red-Haired Anne Shirley*, staged in Tehran in 2018, won an award as one of the best university theatre productions at the twenty-first International University Theatre Festival in Iran (Mollaie). In 2025, a new theatrical adaptation of the novel will premiere at Ontario's Stratford Festival. Countless other professional and amateur performances have also adapted the novel.

You can also encounter Anne by streaming vlog adaptations: the Canadian *Green Gables Fables* and the Finnish *Project Green Gables*. You can listen to Montgomery's work; for example, one *Anne of Green Gables* audiobook is narrated by actor Rachel McAdams, and a dramatic audio series, directed by Megan Follows, is brought to life by Sandra Oh, Catherine O'Hara, and Victor Garber. And of course you can read: fictional adaptations include *Anne of Greenville, Ana of California*, *Anne of Manhattan*, and *Ann of Sunflower Lane.* Then there are graphic novels, which combine Montgomery's own predilection for telling stories through both word and image: *Anne of West Philly, Anne of Green Gables: A Graphic Novel*, *Anne: An Adaptation of Anne of Green Gables (Sort Of)*, and soon, *Dan in Green Gables*.

And it's not just *Anne of Green Gables* that gets adapted. *Anne of Windy Poplars* was turned into a film (in 1940), while a Polish musical of *The Blue Castle* in 1982 drew a Canadian audience to that country (Rubio 7); there was another Polish theatrical adaptation in 2013.8 Montgomery's *Story Girl* books inspired the popular Sullivan TV series *Road to Avonlea* (1990–1996), also available in novelizations. *Emily of New Moon* has been a TV series, an anime, a musical, a children's musical, and soon a graphic novel.9 *Rainbow Valley* has also been a musical. Polish radio adaptations in the 1970s and 1980s included *Anne of Avonlea*, *Anne of the Island*, *Anne's House of Dreams*, *Rainbow Valley*, *Rilla of Ingleside*, and *The Blue Castle*, as well as *Anne of Green Gables*.10

Montgomery's work resonates in part with writers and artists because she engages in universal themes of place, nature, family, friendship, community, and imagination. Montgomery's characters, stories, and settings are evocative, hearty, and yet flexible enough to be open to personal interpretations and the concerns of an evolving culture. As Janice Fiamengo notes, Montgomery creates "portable landscapes" (228), and *Anne of Green Gables* proves to be infinitely transferable and transformable. The story of one resilient outsider can become the story of any resilient, or aspiring to be resilient, outsider. For instance, *Anne with an "E"* centres on Jerry Buote, the Acadian hired boy, marginalized textually and socio-economically in the original novel, while also adding Black, Indigenous, and 2SLGBTQIA+ characters that would have lived in the PEI of Montgomery's time but were largely outside the frame of her experience and imagined worlds.

Interpretation: The texts mentioned so far are adaptations in which central characters and storylines, and sometimes settings, are preserved, even if their creators add new creative flourishes. Some texts, meanwhile, are not adaptations,

but are looser interpretations—core details and themes may remain, but much is changed, including locations, contexts, plots, character names, and personalities.

For example, in the 2024 novel *The Luminous Life of Lucy Landry*, Anna Rose Johnson reinterprets Anne as Lucy, a spirited French-Ojibwe orphan with a nominative acknowledgement of Montgomery. In *The ANNEthology: A Collection of Kindred Spirits Inspired by the Canadian Icon* (also published in 2024), iconic elements of Montgomery's famous creation—a character called Anne, a story of adoption, and a reference to red hair—remain, but the stories also introduce elements that are liminal or absent in the origin text. Such elements include robots, ghosts, horror, and gender, sexual, and racial diversity.

Reflecting Montgomery's deeply literary novels—Emily Woster has identified over seventy literary and biblical allusions in *Anne of Green Gables* ("Rich with Allusions")—and love of books and stories of all kinds, including fairy tales, Heather Fawcett intertextually reimagines Montgomery's most famous novel as a Hansel and Gretel–like story in *The Grace of Wild Things*. Books such as Fawcett's—and even more explicitly, abridgements such as Kallie George's, in which each book focuses on incidents from the original novel, such as *Anne's Tragical Tea Party* and *Anne Dares* (to walk a barn's ridgepole)—invite new readers into Montgomery's world.

Interpretation can also be, perhaps, unintentional. *The Blue Castle* was controversially reimagined in Colleen McCullough's *The Ladies of Missalonghi*, which resulted in allegations of plagiarism and McCullough's defense of "subconscious remembering" (Wood and MacAndrew).

Extension: Sometimes artists want to explore what happened to beloved characters before or after we meet them; Marilla is not the only one who wonders about Anne's early life. Montgomery's fictional universe has been expanded to tell Anne's first years in Budge Wilson's *Before Green Gables,* which was authorized by the Heirs of L.M. Montgomery. The early life of Marilla herself is the subject of novels by Sarah McCoy (*Marilla of Green Gables*) and Louise Michalos (*Marilla Before Anne*).

And what happens after a series ends? Writers have imagined this, too. Two Finnish poets wrote a continuation of Emily's story and the title translates to *Emily Kent—The Girl Poet's Story Continues*. In addition, Anna Rose Johnson's short story "Winter at Twin Chimneys: A Creative Continuation of the *Pat* Series" imagines Pat and Hilary's married life.

Artists creatively engage with Montgomery's legacy as well. For instance, Michel Bourque's picture book—illustrated by Jean-Luc Trudel and available in English as *Meet Me at Green Gables* and in French as *Rideau rouge et pignons verts*—tells the story of real-life friends, Gracie Finley and Glenda Landry, who played fictional kindred spirits, Anne and Diana, in the *Anne* musical on stage at PEI's Confederation Centre of the Arts.

Elements of adaptation, interpretation, and extension flourish online—notably in contributions to *Archive of Our Own*—as Balaka Basu and Lesley D. Clement have shown.11

Portrait: Another form of extension is writing about the life and contexts from which Montgomery's artistry emerged. Montgomery was serious about her life-writing in her ten volumes of journals, and she documented her life elsewhere: in her 1917 memoir, *The Alpine Path: The Story of My Career*, in photographs, and in six multimedia collage scrapbooks. We can also learn about her life in a Heritage Minute, a CBC documentary, and many biographies by Mollie Gillen, Mary Rubio, Jane Urquhart, Janet Lunn, Liz Rosenberg, and others.

Carole Gerson's "Patterns of Commemoration in Montgomery's Afterlife: 'We Are Not Anne of Green Gables; We Are L.M. Montgomery'" offers an in-depth overview of how Montgomery has been honoured "in a wide range of commemorative activities in the public sphere and enjoys a flourishing afterlife on the page and on the stage."

Writers have explored Montgomery's life in fictional form, too; for example, Melanie Fishbane in *Maud: A Novel Inspired by the Life of L.M. Montgomery,* Logan Steiner in *After Anne: A Novel of Lucy Maud Montgomery's Life*, and John Passfield in *L.M. Montgomery: I Gave You Life*. Picture books include *The Summer of the* Marco Polo, about the sometime fastest racing ship in the world that ran aground at Cavendish when Montgomery was a child and inspired a poem, her second piece in print; *Lucy Maud and the Cavendish Cat,* about the journey of Montgomery's cat, Daffy, who travelled from PEI to Ontario to join his owner after her marriage; and an installment in the Little People, Big Dreams series, which also features David Bowie, Marie Curie, Mahatma Gandhi, Jane Austen, and Michael Jordan, among many others.

As Gerson describes in detail, poets, including Anne Compton, Julie Sellers, Rosalee Peppard Lockyer, Vappu Kannas, Sara Peters, and Kat Cameron, have penned verse responses to Montgomery. Sculptors—Claude Roussel, Wynn Walters, Terry Dunton

Stevenson, and Grace Curtis—have also captured Montgomery's likeness.12

Montgomery comes to life on the stage in plays—Michael Hennessey's *Young Maud* and Conrad Boyce's *Maud of Leaskdale*—and musicals: Adam-Michael (Mike) James's and Leo Marchildon's *Nine Lives of L.M. Montgomery.* Montgomery appears in an episode of the popular CBC show *Murdoch Mysteries*, and a biographical series starring Megan Follows, one-time Anne Shirley, was announced in early 2025.13

Encounter: Sometimes Montgomery isn't the main character or focus of a work, but writers imagine their fictional characters encountering or meeting Montgomery, as do the heroines of Mary Frances Coady's *Lucy Maud and Me* and Catherine Little's *Anne of the Library-on-the-Hill*, while Montgomery appears in ghost-form in Marianne Jones's novel *Maud and Me*. Bernice Thurman Hunter's *Booky* series follows a girl, then young woman, coming of age in Depression-era Toronto. Aspiring writer Booky meets Montgomery, just as a young Thurman Hunter herself did. This Booky encounter is interesting because it shows the author's, and character's, conflicted relationship with Montgomery. Susan Meyer writes that "the way that later Canadian children's writers respond to L.M. Montgomery is to see … a mixture of homage and contention, of celebratory affirmation and aggressive rejection" (263). To make this argument about the tensions on Montgomery's creative legacy, Meyer analyzes Thurman Hunter, as well as novels responding to Montgomery by Tim Wynne-Jones, Carol Matas, Jean Little, Julie Johnston, and Kit Pearson.

Self-portrait: Sometimes writers or artists turn the spotlight back on themselves, with the world of L.M. Montgomery offering an opportunity for self-reflection. Take, for example, Lorilee Craker's *Anne of Green Gables, My Daughter, and Me: What My Favorite Book Taught Me about Grace, Belonging, and the Orphan in Us All*. Jen Sookfong Lee's *Superfan: How Pop Culture Broke My Heart, A Memoir* dedicates a wonderful chapter to the experience of reading (and rereading) the *Anne* series to navigate childhood as a second-generation immigrant. The essay "Anne Shirley Was the Best Friend a Queer Brown Boy Could Have" is adapted from C.E. Gatchalian's memoir, *Double Melancholy: Art, Beauty, and the Making of a Brown Queer Man*. In her essay collection *Run Towards the Danger: Confrontations with a Body of Memory* , actor-director Sarah Polley reacts to Montgomery's legacy as mediated through her own (unpleasant) experience playing Sara Stanley on *Road to Avonlea*, inspired by Montgomery's *The Story Girl* series. Eminent Montgomery scholar Elizabeth Epperly came from Virginia to the University of Prince Edward Island as an undergraduate student because of Montgomery, which led to Epperly becoming the first female

president of that institution, an experience she reflects upon in *Power Notes: Leadership by Analogy*.

Guidance: Montgomery's work guides readers and fans in their own lives. She inspires her readers to deepen their spirituality and share that learning with others, as does Rachel Dodge in *The* Anne of Green Gables *Devotional: A Chapter-by-Chapter Companion for Kindred Spirits*, and as does Lori Klein (a rabbi and hospital chaplain) in "What Anne Taught Me About Living with Tragedy and Grief." Irene Gammel, author of *Looking for Anne of Green Gables,* reflects on "Reading to Heal: *Anne of Green Gables* as Bibliotherapy," and novelist-scholar Melanie Fishbane pairs Anne Frank with Montgomery's Anne to show how these two writers (Frank and Montgomery) can guide other writers in "Two Annes, Many Annes: A Writer's Reflection on Reading *Anne of Green Gables* and *The Diary of a Young Girl*." Kate Macdonald Butler taps into another side of the creativity of Montgomery, who was her grandmother. Macdonald Butler focuses on Montgomery's talent for the domestic arts and cooking with *The Anne of Green Gables Cookbook: Charming Recipes from Anne and Her Friends in Avonlea*. Japanese-born writer and baker Terry Kamikawa makes Montgomery-inspired treats—New Moon pudding and raspberry cordial—for guests at her Blue Winds Tea Room in PEI. Montgomery heals, inspires, and helps generate more creativity.14

Icon: Certain aspects of Montgomery's world—Prince Edward Island, a white-and-green farmhouse, red braids, raspberry cordial, and Anne herself—are iconic, easily recognizable, or identified closely with her. In the many *Anne*-related board and picture books that teach young children, creators such as Kelly Hill and Mo Duffy Cobb and Ellie Arscott highlight such iconic characters, images, phrases, and incidents: a cherry tree, a picnic with ice cream, the haunted wood. Jenny Williams's art, available through her Carrot Top Paper Shop, highlights key phrases ("kindred spirits"), inspiring and recognizable quotations, and images (such as Diana's raven tresses leaning against Anne's red ones).15

Versions of Anne appear across Canadian literature. Bonnie Tulloch identifies "Anne-girls" in books by Janet Lunn, Polly Horvath, and Kit Pearson and describes them as "child heroines of … island narratives," who "challenge the gendered conventions that attempt to circumscribe their identities and homebuilding endeavours." And these figures also exist outside the pages of Canadian writing; after all, the first "Anne-girl" is probably the red-haired Pippi Longstocking created by Astrid Lindgren in Sweden, the first country where *Anne* was translated (in 1909).

Humour: Montgomery's icons provide material for branding and literary reinvention, as well as satire and other types of humour. In the TV segment "Anne of Green Gut," the sketch comedy troupe, CODCO, asks the following question, with hilarious results: what if Anne had ended up on that other Atlantic Canadian island, Newfoundland, rather than in the gentler PEI? Anne's iconic looks are played to comic-horror effect when the two male protagonists of CBC TV's *Cavendish* are surrounded by a mob of adult Annes—identifiable by red hair, straw hats, and wincey dresses. *Annekenstein* is another spoof, in this case theatrical, of *Anne* and its commercial culture. Created by Rob MacDonald, it was performed in Charlottetown, PEI, in the 1990s and again in 2016. In Japan, a black comedy manga turned anime, *Sayonara, Zetsubou-Sensei*, by Kōji Kumeta, evokes red-haired Anne ("Akage no An" as she is known in that country) as a shorthand for a persistently sunny personality at odds with an increasingly dark context (Bliss).

Embedment: Sometimes *Anne of Green Gables*, the novel, shows up in other novels (or media), where it is a book to be read, a plot device, and a spur to and reflection of the protagonists' development. Readers of *Anne*—devoted and sometimes reluctant—can be found in Caroline Stellings's *The Contest* (which refers to an Anne-lookalike contest, which the Indigenous heroine enters); Tim Wynne-Jones's short story "The Anne Rehearsals"; Shari Green's novel in verse, *Macy McMillan and the Rainbow Goddess*; Tiffany Schmidt's smart young adult novel *Bookish Boyfriends* Book 3; Lindsay Eland's stylistically playful *Scones and Sensibility*; and Heather Vogel Frederick's *Much Ado About Anne*, part of the Mother-Daughter Book Club series. In both *Tilly and the Bookwanderers*—Anna James's first installment of the fantasy, middle-grade books—and *Kind of a Big Deal* (by Shannon Hale, also the co-creator of the *Princess in Black* series and the author of *Austenland*), the heroines not only read *Anne* but actually get to step into books, including *Anne of Green Gables,* and experience Anne's Avonlea world. Note that Hale's protagonist is named Josie Pie (almost but not quite the name of Anne's frenemy, Josie Pye), so her trip to Avonlea is not totally straightforward. Many of the books—or their series—that embed *Anne* place Montgomery's novel in a literary tradition alongside other classic literature such as *Kidnapped*, *A Little Princess*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Little Women*.

As a book enjoyed by characters in other books, *Anne* occurs in texts for younger readers, too. *Summer in the Land of Anne* is a picture book and a collaboration between two sisters, Montgomery scholar Elizabeth Epperly as writer and Carolyn

Epperly as painter-illustrator; it follows a family's pilgrimage to the land of Montgomery, a powerful experience shared with thousands of other families.

In terms of embedded books, there's also the example of the TV show *Russian Doll*, which features *Emily of New Moon.* It is the favourite book of the main character played by Natasha Lyonne, who says, "EVERYBODY loves Anne. But I like Emily. She's DARK."

Reference: While *Anne* is central in the books just mentioned, writers often make brief but meaningful references to the book in their own novels. *Anne* is name-checked in Jenny Han's To All the Boys I've Loved Before series and Dan Gemeinhart's father-and-daughter road trip novel, *The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise*. As well as middle-grade and young adult coming-of-age books, *Anne* is referenced by mystery/crime writers such as Alan Bradley (*The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie*, part of the Flavia de Luce series), Lisa Jewell (*The Family Upstairs*), and Laura Lippman (*The Lady in the Lake* and *Wilde Lake*). *Anne* shows up in historical fiction that transports audiences back to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries around the time Montgomery's most well-known novel was set, published, or first read. For example, historical fiction by Janette Oke and Elizabeth Waterston (a founding Montgomery scholar) explores Canadian history and westward expansion. This Montgomery-referencing historical fiction list also includes Sydney Taylor's *All-of-a-Kind Family* series about a Jewish family of five girls growing up on New York City's Lower East Side in the early twentieth century. In a Dear Canada series novel, *Turned Away: The World War II Diary of Devorah Bernstein*, about Canada's failed response to Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Europe, Carole Matas's Canadian heroine reads *Anne* as an escape from the impossible situation facing her extended European family. Recent romance by Carley Fortune and literary fiction—such as Naima Coster's *Halsey Street*, a story of an artist, gentrification, and a Dominican American family—mention *Anne* too. Atlantic Canadian writers Lesley Crewe and Megan Gail Coles also reference the region's most well-known novel.

Anne shows up on TV shows as varied as *The Simpsons*, *Stranger Things*, *GLOW* (*Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling*), and *Criminal Minds*.16

References to Montgomery's books beyond *Anne of Green Gables* also happen: Mimi Matthews's *The Belle of Belgrave Square,* Victorian historical fiction, includes one to *The Blue Castle*; the third installment of the *Booky* series (by Bernice Thurman

Hunter) features *Jane of Lantern Hill*; while Jean Little's *Spring Begins in March* includes *Anne of Ingleside*.

Allusion: Sometimes references to Montgomery's work, life, or legacy are more oblique, operating at the level of allusion. As Emily Woster points out, Montgomery, in the early part of her late novel, *Anne of Ingleside*, replaces allusions to other writers' works with evocations of her own books in the *Anne* series.17 Montgomery was herself a writer responding to her own work, as Balaka Basu has also outlined.

The writers alluding to Montgomery include Margaret Atwood. As Temma Berg has shown, Atwood's coming-of-age novel *Cat's Eye*, about fraught female friendship, is responding to *Anne of Green Gables* and perhaps even Montgomery's journals.

Susan Meyer, meanwhile, in "L.M. Montgomery's Influence on Canadian Children's Literature," identifies and describes complex allusions to and rewritings of Montgomery's work in later children's literature, including the following:

- *Emily of New Moon* (in Jean Little's *Dancing in the Snow*, Julie Johnston's *Adam and Eve and Pinch-Me*, Kit Pearson's *The Daring Game* and *Awake and Dreaming*)
- *Rilla of Ingleside* (in Little's *Listen for the Singing* and *Brothers from Home: The World War I Diary of Eliza Bates*)
- *Anne of Green Gables* (also in Johnston's novel and Kit Pearson's *The Sky Is Falling*)

Lesley Clement identifies allusions in more recent fiction, namely Montgomery scholar Benjamin Lefebvre's novel *In the Key of Dale,* with its connections to *Emily of New Moon*, while the increasing number of fan fiction pieces on *Archive of Our Own* are strong on allusion. (See Basu.)

Resonance: Montgomery's reach can be more indirect. *The Cliffs* by J. Courtney Sullivan, who wrote the foreword for Penguin's 2017 *Anne of Green Gables*, resonates with Montgomery's interests in place-love and women's stories, memory, and community.

Then there are resonances that may be more personal to me, rather than having any direct link with Montgomery but that I hope are evocative for other readers and that reveal the profound and universal engagements of Montgomery's work.

I first encountered *Foster* by Irish author Claire Keegan in its cinematic adaptation, *The Quiet Girl*. The story of a young girl with red hair sent to live with an elderly couple on a rural farm immediately echoes with Anne's own story, as do the themes of past trauma, meddling neighbours, found family, intergenerational love, and natural beauty.

A Ghost in the Throat by another Irish writer, Doireann Ní Ghríofa, is the story of a poet chronicling new motherhood as she also explores the life of an eighteenth-century noblewoman and translates that noblewoman's poem from Irish into English. This is a story about women's lives and creativity; it is about the past and finding and preserving half-forgotten voices, texts, and languages. Its focus on writing coupled with Gothic elements makes this a text that Emily Byrd Starr and her fans would appreciate.

The Snow Child by American Eowyn Ivey evokes *The Blue Castle* for me. *The Blue Castle* is a great nature novel and a great winter novel (the beauty and freedom and joy of those skating scenes!). *The Snow Child*, set in 1920s Alaska, is contemporaneous with *The Blue Castle* and follows a married couple, who, desperate to have a child, build a snowman, which comes to life. As in Montgomery's novels, place is setting, character, and plot.

These days, I spend a lot of time reading Marie-Louise Gay's wonderful *Stella* picture-book series. Red hair, whimsy, imagination, and natural beauty—I see Anne's spirit here too.

Writers and Artists Respond to L.M. Montgomery

This brings me (finally!) to this very special collection, *Writers and Artists Respond to L.M. Montgomery*, which came together in 2024 to honour 150 years since the 1874 birth of Montgomery. The group of writers and artists responding to L.M. Montgomery just got a whole lot bigger with this collection's thirty-two reflections and works of art.

And how fortunate we all are that this work was sharpened and deepened through the expert eye and pen of editor extraordinaire Liz Rosenberg, who is, also, of course, a novelist, poet, and Montgomery biographer. It has been an honour to learn from and be inspired by all the contributors. Thank you to our readers for joining us. I look forward to continuing this conversation about Montgomery's artistic and creative legacy with you.

So ***why*** do artists and writers continue to respond to Montgomery's work? Or, to paraphrase Canadian children's author and self-proclaimed Montgomery protegee, Kit Pearson, what *is* it about these books (Jenkinson 66)? The artists/writers in this collection answer these questions while creating new art—in word and image and sound—of their own.

Montgomery reminds us of the power of stories and storytelling. Her work can help readers and artists express emotions, deepen experience, and build relationships. As collection contributor Merav Fima writes, "One of the greatest joys of becoming a parent was the opportunity to share my favourite children's books with my daughters." Fima read her favourite classic books to her infants, and, by the time her older daughter was three months old, the baby had "read" many books, including *Anne of Green Gables*.

Fima reflects on how her young family navigated COVID-19 through books and reading, and Lesli Weston's paintings, also included here, were made in response to the L.M. Montgomery Readathon on Facebook, which was organized by Andrea McKenzie and Benjamin Lefebvre to build a Montgomery community online during the pandemic.[18]

Gail Newman shares the most powerful expression in this collection of how stories can be a refuge during life's most extreme difficulties, its horrors. During World War II, Newman's mother was transported from the Lodz Ghetto in Poland to Auschwitz, then to a work camp; Newman's poem "My Mother Remembers" speaks in her mother's voice, honouring how she recollected and shared stories from film and books, including *Anne of Green Gables*, with her fellow prisoners: "I remembered the words, / and told the stories / until we forgot where we were." **Section I, "Story Girls (and Women): The Power of Stories and Storytelling,"** includes contributions from Jeanne Birdsall, Gail Newman, Lois Metzger, Ewa Henry-Dawson, Ciara Wareing, Merav Fima, Phoebe Stone, and Sarah Bacaller.

Montgomery once wrote in relation to the writing of beloved novelist and playwright Anthony Hope, "it is fairy tales the world wants. Real life is all the 'real life' we want. Give us something better in books" (*CJ* 7: 316, my emphasis). Montgomery in turn inspires writers and artists to create something better in their own art and lives, what we're calling our own blue castles.

Section II, “Our Own Blue Castles: Seeing Beauty, Creating Refuge, Making Home, Shaping Community,” features pieces from Jennifer Shelby, Caroline Stellings, Julene Waffle, Claudia Mills, Michael Rosen, Aquinnah Bree, Marie Anne Bérard, Trinna S. Frever, and Lesli Weston.

Other contributors create portraits of L.M. Montgomery, showing us the many sides of this woman and artist: an icon to be commemorated, a nature writer, a PEI writer, a bride, a teacher, a mother. In **Section III, “Portraits of L.M. Montgomery,”** such portraits in different media are shared by Barbara Pratt, James Garratt, Richard Lemm, Doug Caves Senior, Jane Eccles, Rosalee Peppard Lockyer, Grigory Stanskiy, and Vappu Kannas.

While Section III focuses on the author, Section IV will look at our contributors themselves as artists, writers, and creators. We see in the pieces gathered in Section IV how the worlds that Montgomery created are infinitely transportable, becoming woven into other people’s childhoods and memories, their coming of age as artists, their creativity and artistry, and their connection to place, home, and loved ones. The **“Portraits of Writers and Artists Responding to L.M.M.” of Section IV** have been created by V.E.H. Masters, Julie Sellers, Linda Atkinson, Logan Steiner, Steve Valliere, Sandra Churchill, and Deirdre Kessler.

I’ll end by thanking my co-editor, Liz Rosenberg, and all the contributors to this very special collection. Thank you to our audience too. Thank you for joining us; we hope you enjoy this journey into Montgomery’s literary and artistic legacies. We hope that this collection deepens your own engagement with this beloved writer’s work and that it perhaps inspires you, if you aren’t already, to become a writer or artist responding to L.M. Montgomery.

*

Bio: I am the Chair of L.M. Montgomery Studies with the L.M. Montgomery Institute and associate professor in applied communication, leadership, and culture at the University of Prince Edward Island. Forthcoming in 2025 are my lectures for The Great Courses on the “Life and Work of L.M. Montgomery,” which will be available on Audible. I’m also the editor-in-chief of the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies* and project co-coordinator of Your L.M. Montgomery Story with Trinna S. Frever.

I'd like to continue this conversation about Montgomery's literary and artistic legacy with you. I'd welcome YOUR suggestions to expand this overview of Montgomery's impact. (Reach out at kscarth@upei.ca.)

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Banner image: Textured tapestry, "You never know what peace is until…" by Lyndsey Darling. For the artist's description of this piece, see https://journaloflmmontgomerystudies.ca/news/Maud150/Victoria-Day

- 1 Thanks to Elizabeth Epperly for this term in this context.
- 2 For L'Engle, see Lawrence; for Lindgren, see Warnqvist; for Franklin, see White. For other writers/artists mentioned here, see bibliographical entries under the artists'/writers' names. The topic of writers and artists responding to Montgomery can be explored by reading or listening to what writers/artists have said or written about Montgomery and experiencing what they've created in response to her. Other particularly useful resources for learning about Montgomery's literary and creative legacy include "Afterwords" in Bode et al., *Children and Childhoods*; Susan Meyer's "L.M. Montgomery's Influence on Canadian Children's Literature"; Carole Gerson's "Patterns of Commemoration in Montgomery's Afterlife"; Emily Woster's "Welcome to the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies*"; Kate Macdonald Butler's "Dear Grandmother Maud on the Road to Heaven"; the @foundlmmontgomery Instagram managed by Alyssa Gillespie; goodreads lists such as "L.M. Montgomery in Fiction"; Balaka Basu's "Continuing Stories"; "#Maud150 Tributes" from the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies*; Benjamin Lefebvre's "Bibliography" on the L.M. Montgomery Online website, *The* Anne of Green Gables *Manuscript* online

project, and Ragon Duffy and Kelly Gerner's *Kindred Spirits Book Club* podcast. There will also be a list of writers/artists quotations, shared via the *Journal of L.M. Montgomery Studies* and the L.M. Montgomery Institute, that will be an excellent resource for further reading and scholarship—Liz Rosenberg and I collected many of the quotations, which have been organized and presented by Eve Murphy.

- 3 Note that the two tables included in this essay are partial—they do not include the names of contributors to the "Writers and Artists Respond to L.M. Montgomery" collection. The list of actors in particular could be very long indeed—I have included actors I have particularly enjoyed, who have had a significant role in Montgomery's legacy, or who are interesting/surprising inclusions. (I would love to hear readers' suggestions; let me know if there's anyone you think should be included.)
- 4 For the Finnish writers listed here from Saisio to Lilius, see Suvi Ahola and Satu Koskimies's collection of reading experiences called *Uuden kuun ja Vihervaaran tytöt* [*Girls of New Moon and Green Gables*].
- 5 For Brooks, see Kent; for Meyer, see La Force; for Gorman, see St. Felix; for Sutcliff, see Little, "But What About Jane?"; for Callaghan, see "Meet the Author: Jo Callaghan"; for Kay, see Spowart; for Koskimies and Huotarinen, see McDonald-Rissanen and Kannas; for Polish writers, see Wieczorkiewicz; for Brazilian ones, see dos Santos and Ferreira and dos Santos; for McCullough, see De Marr; for Somers, see Coll; for Chinese writers, see Du; for Ichikawa, see Grudova; for Yuzuki, see Whitehead. For these and all other writers/artists, see entries under their names. With profound thanks to Laura Leden (for the list of Finnish and Norwegian creators); Jenny Litster (for Jackie Kay and Rakie Ayola); Allison McBain Hudson (for the Rachel Corcoran reference); Michalina Wesołowska and Anna Czernow (for Polish suggestions); Tatiane Rodrigues Lopes dos Santos (for Brazilian ones); Yoshiko Akamatsu, Kazuko Sakuma, and Michael B. Pass (for Japanese writers and artists); Mina Mollaie (for Iranian suggestions); Elizabeth DeBlois (for information about Anne Rice and Kristin Hannah); and Irina Levchenko (for Russian and Austrian suggestions). Lesley D. Clement and Jane Ledwell both elevated this piece by giving editorial and substantive suggestions, including various suggestions of additional creators of fan fiction, sculpture, and theatre.
- 6 See "'Anne of Green Gables' Enjoyable Musical."
- 7 For discussion of this TV production, see Robinson.
- 8 With thanks to Michalina Wesołowska.

- 9 For discussion of the anime, see Akamatsu; for the musical, see Jones; for the graphic novel, see Morrison.
- 10 With thanks to Michalina Wesołowska.
- 11 I first learned about Montgomery fan fiction when I was an external examiner for Emily Mohabir's master's thesis, "Anne of the Imaginative Space: Fan Activities as Textual Negotiation of L.M. Montgomery's Anne Narrative," in July 2018 at Acadia University.
- 12 Jane Ledwell writes about Dunton Stevenson that "This is a local sculptor who created a beautiful likeness that used to stand in the visitors' information centre in Borden-Carleton when it first opened after the Confederation Bridge was built." For more information on the other sculptors, see Gerson.
- 13 See Gerson for more information about representation of L.M. Montgomery in art and other sectors (at heritage sites, by national institutions, in tourism initiatives).
- 14 See also Elaine and Kelly Crawford's *Aunt Maud's Recipe Book* and Anna Pölkki's *Kakkuja salaisesta puutarhasta* [*Cakes from the Secret Garden*].
- 15 See also Nova Scotian Brianna Corr Scott's art, including a double-decker *Anne of Green Gables/Avonlea* book cover, as well as Irish artist Rachel Corcoran's visual art.
- 16 See Fraser, and Bacle and Snetiker.
- 17 See Woster, "The Literature and Libraries of L.M. Montgomery" and "What Was L.M. Montgomery Reading?"
- 18 For further discussion, see McKenzie, "Reading *Rilla* through COVID-19."

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