

Canadian list price (yes, it is significantly discounted by some online retailers) this is a book to buy. And, yes, there is a limited edition of 100 copies, which differs minimally from the trade edition. The box and accordion sheets are identical to the trade edition with the exception that on the rear exterior of the box the limited edition does not have a price shown and the bar code differs. The limited edition has a paste-down on the back inside cover of the box which reads:

For this limited edition, 100 pages were handset in Lightline Gothic on vintage Whatman paper and printed by The Grenfell Press in March 2010. Each page was then incised with one to three cuts, whose number and placement on the page were determined through chance operations. They were signed and numbered by Anne Carson and Robert Currie, then signed by Leslie Miller and Brad Ewing of the Grenfell Press.

In keeping with Carson's desire for privacy (a number of her books have as a biographical note the single sentence "Anne Carson lives in Canada"), the signatures on the insert sheet in the limited edition are tiny pencil initials. Minimalist or not, I am pleased to have the limited edition in my collection.

While the appearance of *Nox* would appear to dispel my initial assertion that worthwhile books are increasingly relegated to the margins of publishing, I should note that Carson presented the work to Knopf and she stated that the publisher "just didn't get it." Thank God that there are still trade publishers out there, albeit perhaps only smaller ones, who do get it.

---

<sup>1</sup> Craig Morgan Teicher, "A Classical Poet Redux," *Publishers Weekly*, March 29, 2010, 23.

---

~ Paul Whitney is city librarian at the Vancouver Public Library.

*The Man Who Loved Books Too Much: The True Story of a Thief, a Detective, and a World of Literary Obsession*

By Allison Hoover Bartlett  
(Viking Canada, 2009, \$32)

PERHAPS THE SUBTITLE TELLS IT ALL. This is an exciting, well-written book set in the antiquarian book trade with a hero, a villain and a theme of obsessive-compulsive behaviour, most commonly known in our circles as bibliomania or biblioholism.

Allison Hoover Bartlett is a San Francisco journalist who has written for the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *San Francisco Chronicle Magazine*, *San Francisco Magazine* and *Salon.com* on a wide variety of subjects, including travel, art, science, education and crime. Her original article about celebrated book thief John Gilkey, on which the book is based, was included in *The Best American Crime Reporting* (2007).

Perhaps the best tribute to Bartlett's writing style comes from fellow author Erik Larson, who wrote about crime himself in his acclaimed book *The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic and Madness at the Fair That Changed America*. Larson read a proof copy of Bartlett's book and had this to say about the experience: "As a rule I approach unsolicited galley proofs in the same degree of delight that I reserve for root canals. This book surprised me. I read the first paragraph and was drawn in, not so much by the subject matter as by the author's cozy, quiet style. ... I found the narrative compelling, and I loved the inside stories about old books."

But if the writing style draws the reader in, so does the story itself. The villain of the piece is the compulsive book thief John Gilkey. Bartlett makes it quite clear from the very beginning that the motive behind Gilkey's obsessive collecting and theft of books was not primarily a financial one but one of true bibliomania. Lacking the funds to achieve his monomaniacal life goal of "owning a rich man's library," Gilkey turned his energies and wits to amassing this type of library by deception and theft. (Gilkey boasted

to his father at one point, “I’m going to build us a grand estate.”)

It would be unfair to reveal all his methods, since that could very well dampen the future reader’s enjoyment of the book. One method of deception, however, involved laying the groundwork at his place of employment, Sak’s Men’s Store in San Francisco. Working as a sales clerk in men’s furnishings, Gilkey was able over a period of months to leisurely accumulate duplicate sales slips from credit card transactions. He later used the credit card numbers to order expensive antiquarian books over the phone. The credit cards were still active, of course, since the cards’ owners had no idea that anyone had filched their account numbers. The antiquarian book dealer would put the transaction through to the credit card company and no one would be the wiser. Once the payment had been verified, Gilkey or an accomplice would drop around to the bookstore to pick up their stolen goods.

Fortunately for the antiquarian book trade the story had a determined and persistent hero as well in the person of Ken “Bibliodick” Sanders, a successful and passionate antiquarian bookseller in Salt Lake City. Sanders has admitted to being obsessed with books himself, but in his case it took the more healthy forms of reading and of taking pride in the books he sold in his shop. He was also a book dealer with a detective’s bent.

But Sanders was no ordinary bibliodick; he was in fact Security Chair of the Antiquarian Booksellers’ Association of America. He brought his passion and determination to this job as he certainly had to all others. Bartlett, writes Sanders, “was as determined to catch book thieves as Gilkey was in stealing books.” While it took Sanders some time to catch up with his book thief, he did so in the early part of 2003, and Gilkey ultimately spent some 18 months in San Quentin prison after his conviction in 2004. To find out how Sanders eventually caught his obsessive thief in a well-planned sting operation, I suggest you either buy the book or borrow it from your public library. Stealing it is not an option!

REVIEWED BY RICHARD HOPKINS

## *The Beer Trials*

By Seamus Campbell & Robin Goldstein  
(Fearless Critic Media, 2010, US\$14.95)

BEER AND SUMMER SEEM TO go hand in hand, and with this “case” of 24 pages, reviewing a book of beers seemed in order. While precious few of the 250 beers featured in *The Beer Trials* are Canadian (the most interesting are three from Quebec’s Unibroue), the work is notable both as a reference work and for its usefulness to collectors of breweriana.

Breweriana, of course, is the printed ephemera and other memorabilia related to beer and brewing, and includes scope for those interested in the design and printing of labels — perhaps as narrow a focus as those of Graphics Philately Association members, who have an eye for “the history of graphic communications as represented on stamps and other philatelic materials.”

While precious few beer labels make much of calligraphy or books (Schmaltz Brewing Co.’s He’Brew labels being a notable exception, those of Germany’s Aecht Schlenkeria being others), the graphic appeal of beer labels—as with labels for wine or fruit crates—can’t help but catch the eye of those interested in printing and the arrangement of text. Tiny posters slapped on glass pillars, in this reviewer’s opinion, and every bit as much worth collecting.

*The Beer Trials* brings a mix of critical commentary and economic analysis to its reviews. The introduction places this volume squarely in the family of *The Wine Trials*, which Goldstein published with Roman Weil in 2008. But there’s also an overview and commentary on different styles of beer that introduces the novice to the basic concept of beer and beer styles and will make you think twice before you order a lager (Japanese, North American, Pilsner?) or an ale (Bock, Brown, Belgian, Pale?). Or perhaps a smoke beer or barley wine. There’s also a healthy dose of science for those wanting to know more about yeast, fermentation, and that peculiar skunkiness I’ve been taught to associate with Heineken.

But the real surprise when I opened the book was what prompts its review here: the diligent notes on packaging, and especially the