

A conversation with writers



By Kristena **Schutt-Moore**

For all of April, Hay Lake Lodge hosted two writers-in-residence with a special event held on Tuesday, April 26 to invite the community to come have a Conversation with Writers. Isabella Mori and Michelle Thomas were on hand to talk with those in attendance about writing, inspirations and hospitality.

Mori, who published their first book in the English Language while she was a resident of the Bancroft area from 1984 to 1987, writes poetry, fiction and non-fiction books. Currently they live in Vancouver and have continued on writing in both English and German. Their most known book of poems is *A bagful of haiku - 87 imperfections*, and were the German translator for the book *Reading Canada*, which was a profile of Canada's diverse literature commissioned for the 2017 Frankfurt Book Fair. In 2018, they won the Cecilia Lamont first prize in poetry. They are alumni of SFU's The Writers Studio. Poetry and short fiction have appeared in publications such as *Presence*, *Kingfisher*, and *The Group Of Seven Reimagined*. Mori is also the founder of Muriels Journey Poetry Prize which celebrates edgy, socially engaged poetry. Their current projects include *Believe Me - A Mental Health Trifecta*, which combines short stories and poems with interviews and research about mental health and addiction, *Bones For The Stars To See*, a historical fantasy novel written in haibun format, and *Not So Pretty Haiku*, a volume of poetry that combines pretty nature photography with much more somber haiku, to be published this year at Tigerpetal Press. Isabella has an M.Ed., works in psychiatry, and writes for and co-edits *Family Connections*, a newsletter about mental health and addiction.

Thomas is a Seneca Bear Clan woman from Six Nations of the Grand River. She is a self-published author of a memoir entitled *Beyond the Leaf's Thickness* and a collection of poetry entitled *Letting Yourself Be Free*. She says she has been given many gifts to carry; including traditional healer, author, educator, spirit painter and Reiki Master and she is passionate about creating opportunities for people to decolonize their minds. Thomas carries a diverse background of education, sociology, business and healing and wellness. She can be contacted at (226) 934-3881 or at michelle@michellethomas.ca

This Conversation with Writers event is well on its way to becoming an annual April event for Hay Lake Lodge. As owner and operator Erin Morlock says "This last year I have been reflecting on the deeper meanings of hospitality. I also have known for a very long time that this lake and this area speaks to people, offers them something special. Providing an opportunity for writers to accept this place's hospitality, to write about the experience, seemed like an experience worth sharing."