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Louise Penny's April Newsletter

"Easter says you can put truth in a grave, but it won't stay there." 
- **Clarence W. Hall**



Quebec Spring

Happy Spring! Happy Easter. It's always both a magical and unsettling time here in Quebec. So unpredictable. Last year at this time the trees were budding - and then there was a killing frost and it ruined the apple crops and a lot of plants and flowers. The worst thing that can happen is an early thaw.

This year it's mild, then freezing, mild then a storm. Rain, then sunny, then a blizzard.

As weird as it sounds, that's far more normal. Never so mild that anything actually comes into bud, so the freeze doesn't kill.

Nature is riveting. The best drama going.

March

March was also magical and unsettling. It included a wonderful trip to New York City for work - though it barely feels like work. Dinner and lunches organized by the publisher so I could meet people who haven't yet discovered Gamache et al. then a photo shoot (pictured top left) - in anticipation of author photos for HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN - but also posters and banners. So glad I waxed!

But March also saw a very good friend diagnosed with end-stage leukemia. After three weeks in hospital Jim died - surrounded by friends.

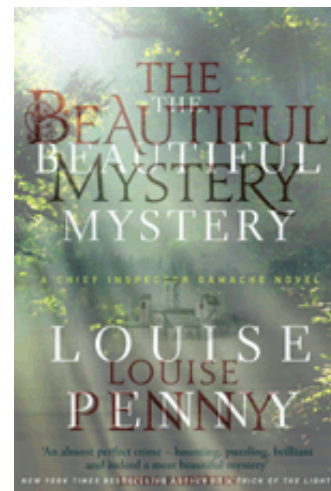
Such is life - such is Spring. Ends and beginnings. Sounds trite, I know - but the older I get the simpler life seems to become. And what I once mocked as trite I now see as clear and true. Very calming.

HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN - Final edits

So much of what we're doing now is gearing up for the late summer launch of HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN. I just finished the final pass pages (the last edit) on the book. This is the last chance to catch spelling and grammatical mistakes. And still we miss some.

As you know, we've revealed the cover - sublime!

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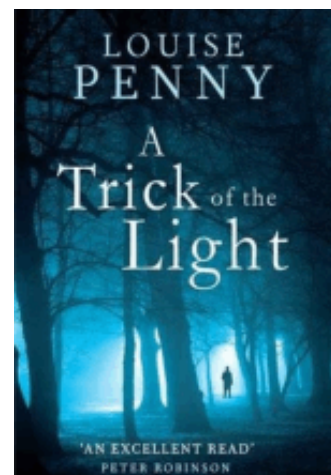
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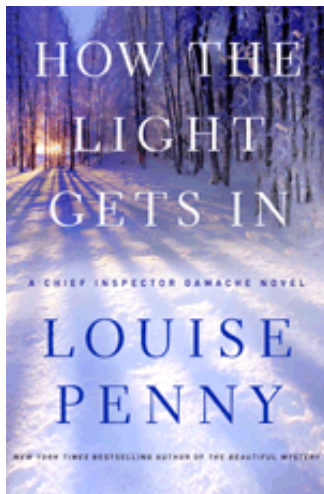
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And some of the Advance Readers Copies (ARCs) of HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN have gone out and we just learned that the prestigious (and very critical) Kirkus Review has given it a rare starred review! Here's an excerpt from what they said:

....luminous insights into trust and friendship, that will hook readers and keep them hooked. (★ Kirkus Starred Review)

Such a thrilling way for HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN, the latest Gamache book, to head into the world and into your hands. Wow!

THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY shortlisted for the CBC Bookie award

More great news for THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY. It has been shortlisted for the CBC Bookie award - for Best Canadian Book. I'm so happy! But, as ever, I need your help. The award is based on votes - if you [click here](#) it will take you to the page and you can vote (for me, please). I believe you don't have to be Canadian to vote. And I think you can do it once a day. Please pass it on. And the link is also a GREAT place to find a wonderful Canadian reading list.

Malice Domestic - crime readers/writers conference

At the beginning of May I'll be heading to Washington - Bethesda, actually - for the great crime readers/writers conference called Malice Domestic. THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY has been nominated for the Agatha Award for Best Mystery Novel - and it will be given out at Malice. So exciting! And to add to the excitement, one of the Guests of Honor is the fabulous Peter Robinson. He asked that I do the onstage interview with him at the lunch on Friday, May 3rd. He and I are friends and I'm a huge fan of his Inspector Banks novels.

If you'd like to go to Malice Domestic, [here's the link to their website](#)

Sandra Goldberg lecture on Palliative Care

Then, on flying back to Montreal, I'll be interviewing Will Schwalbe onstage. I was once quite active in Palliative Care in Quebec, as a ward volunteer then sitting on the McGill Council on Palliative Care. The head of the council is a personal friend - Kappy Flanders. Every year, to raise money and awareness, they hold the Sandra Goldberg lecture on Palliative Care and this year they invited Will Schwalbe to speak. When his mother was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer, they passed the time during the chemo sessions talking about books. They shared a love of the written word. Eventually, mother and son realized they'd formed their own intimate, powerful book club.

After her death, Will wrote the most wonderful, funny, insightful,

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Here's the order of the Chief Inspector Gamache books, from the first to the most recent:

STILL LIFE

A FATAL GRACE / DEAD COLD

THE CRUELEST MONTH

A RULE AGAINST MURDER / THE MURDER STONE

THE BRUTAL TELLING

BURY YOUR DEAD

A TRICK OF THE LIGHT

THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY



thoughtful book about their experience. It's called, THE END OF YOUR LIFE BOOKCLUB. It's luminous.

Kappy asked if I'd interview him on stage, and I immediately said yes. One of the many, many, unexpected gifts of being a writer myself is getting to meet so many gifted writers. Like Peter Robinson. Like Will Schwalbe.

If you'd like to go to Sandra Goldberg Lecture, it's at 5:30 at the Leacock Building of McGill University in Montreal on May 7th.

For more information about this event, click on the poster opposite to see a full size version via my website.

If you'd like to join me at the events, but can't actually get there, an option is to read my Facebook page. I try to talk everyday about what I'm doing (or not doing). It would be fun to have you along! Just [click here](#) if you're interested.

Much of my attention is on HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN. This book means so much to me, and I hope you feel the same way. It answers so many of the questions and issues that have built up over the previous 8 books. A difficult book to write, for many reasons. But also deeply, deeply satisfying for me.

I am keenly aware of your support, of how you have championed the books and the characters. How you've told friends, and family and complete strangers about Chief Inspector Gamache - and the books that appear to be about death but are, in reality, about life.

As Will Schwalbe and his mother discovered - reading (and writing) is an act of creation, whether we have seventy more years or just hours left. It is about life. About eternity. Powerful, positive, creative.

Thank you, dear friend, for breathing life into Gamache and Clara, Gabri and Ruth. And for recognizing Three Pines as a haven for second chances. And that the books are more about the mystery of life, as they are about murder.

You can pre-order HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN through your independent bookstore, or a chain, or online.

And if you can continue to spread the word about the Gamache books I would so appreciate it!

Thank you. Merci.

And, happy Easter.

Louise

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