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Louise Penny's January Newsletter

"I know. I'm lazy. But I made myself a New Years resolution that I would write myself something really special. Which means I have 'til December, right?"

- Catherine O'Hara



2014 into 2015

Happy New Year! Off we go into 2015. It always seems so exciting.



Above are some of the pictures taken during 2014. Pictured left I was on stage with my publisher Andrew Martin at this years book tour - The Long Way Home.

The tour was enormously successful, with staggering numbers in attendance, the church shot above was taken in Vancouver and as you can see it was packed. For those of you who couldn't make the tour, [here's a short video](#) of what it looked and felt like. The photo at the far left was from the Edgar Awards, the one next to it was at the launch party in Knowlton, and the one at the far right is Michael with My Assistant Lise. To see more shots from the year [click here](#) to view them via the website.

I have to say, a year ago, standing at the entrance of 2014, I could not have predicted much of what happened. The things I thought might happen didn't, the things I feared would happen didn't, for the most part. And so much totally unforeseen, was seen.

Like you, our 2014 was a mixed bag. Michael was diagnosed with dementia, though to be honest, that was the one big thing we both saw coming. It was simply confirmed this year.

And while things are very different a year later for Michael, he remains the happiest person in any room, perhaps on the planet - sometimes on other planets.

Michael is still reading (loving the latest Deborah Crombie!) and does jigsaw puzzles. He's no longer doing his own art, but adores filling in colours in books. And food - don't get me started on that man's love of food.

He's not speaking a lot, but now he's taken, without prompting, to look at me and say out of the blue, 'I love you too', as though I'd just said it to him. It's very sweet and almost too beautiful.

Every day I genuinely thank God that this is our journey. I'm not

The Long Way Home US / Canada / UK



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How The Light Gets In

US / Canada / UK

kidding, or trying to be falsely optimistic. We are among the lucky ones. His dementia shows in many forms and has taken so many aspects of his life. But his joy remains and grows.

If 2014 had one huge gift, it's that.

Sadly, we lost Trudy, our Golden Retriever, after her brave fight with cancer. That was horrific.

But then who comes into our life about a month later? Bishop! At 9 years of age he needed a home. His family could no longer care for him, though he visits them as often as possible. We were thrilled to take him in. Bishop and Michael immediately bonded and the only difficulty is that Bishop loves to lie down right in Michael's path.

Professionally 2014 was magnificent. Utterly amazing. And, to be honest, just such a lovely tonic for some of the other things happening.

HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN came out in paperback and hit the New York Times list. It was nominated for an Edgar Award, the first for the Gamache series. We all went to New York City for that. There was so much hubbub at the awards banquet I might have intimated to my agent, who was there from London, that I had in fact won. Shhhhh.

HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN was also shortlisted for the Gold Dagger for Best Crime Novel in the UK. We were hoping to get to London for that, but Michael had a heart episode (I think there was just too much in it) that we decided to stay home.

The book also came out in French here in Quebec (La Faille en Toute Chose) and made bestseller lists and was named Best Book of the Year by a number publications.

The new Gamache novel, THE LONG WAY HOME, debuted at #1 on the New York Times and other bestseller lists. It was also #1 on the Canadian Globe and Mail list, making it the top book in North America.

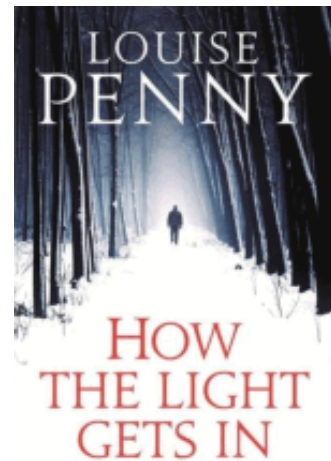
Can you believe it??? #1 in North America! Absolutely incredible. Even as I write that I think, 'That can't have happened. I must be lying. I hope no one finds out... Did I tell you about the Edgar win...?'

But - it actually happened. I still shake my head. A year ago it was something I dreamed might happen, but never expected. Five years ago the thought of having the #1 book in North America was a fantasy. Ten years ago it was utterly inconceivable.

In fact, 2015 marks the tenth anniversary of the first appearance of Chief Inspector Armand Gamache, and Three Pines. STILL LIFE came out in the UK and Canada in 2005, and a year later in the US. It went on to be named one of the five best crime fiction books of the decade by Deadly Pleasures Magazine. Though, when it first came out not many noticed.

Michael paid for us to go to events in the US for the first two years, and to libraries and small bookstores in Canada. He did it all with such pleasure, never once making me feel that this was too much trouble, or money, or that writing was just a hobby of mine. Into the car we'd get and drive to an event, where if 5 people showed up it was a success. Then back in the car to drive home. Or stay overnight in a hotel.

It was an adventure.



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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

HOW THE LIGHT GETS IN

THE LONG WAY HOME

The thought that a few years later a Gamache novel could possibly be the #1 book in North America really is, well, incredible.

This, of course, is thanks to many people - Michael foremost. And My Assistant Lise, (pictured top right with Michael) who is as much a sister and friend as a colleague. And my publishers and editors and agents. And the booksellers.

But all that would be useless, meaningless, without you.

You picked up a Gamache book. You read it. And then...and then...you did the most wonderful thing. You told others. You championed Armand and Clara and Gabri and Ruth et al.

And so, as 2014 ends, it finds THE LONG WAY HOME on all sorts of Best Book of the Year lists including:

- Kirkus Reviews named it a Best Crime Fiction of the Year
 - The Washington Post chose it as one of the Best Fiction Books of the Year
 - The Globe and Mail named to their Top 100 Books of the Year and one of the top 5 crime novels
 - National Post named THE LONG WAY HOME Best in Continuing Series, Masters Edition
 - The Toronto Star has named THE LONG WAY HOME as one of the Best Crime Fiction books of the Year
 - Amazon.com named it a Best Book of 2014
 - Kobo has placed it in the Top Crime Fiction of the Year
 - The Long Way Home has been included in BookBrowse's annual Best of the Year 2014 list
 - Barnes and Noble chose it as a Top Holiday Book
- AudioFile has named THE LONG WAY HOME the Best Crime Fiction Audio Book of 2014!!
- This is a bittersweet acknowledgement of the gifts of Ralph Cosham, since he passed away earlier in the fall. But it is still reason to celebrate a wonderful man. Oh, how we miss him.
 - The Long Way Home audiobook has also been included in Audible's Best of 2014
 - The Library Journal have chosen THE LONG WAY HOME as one of their Best Media / Best Audio books for 2014
 - Aunt Agatha's (a fabulous crime fiction bookstore in Ann Arbor) has named THE LONG WAY HOME one of the Best Crime Novels of 2014

Satellite book tour

Besides the regular book tour, which I did in August/September, the US publishers organized what's called a "satellite tour" - by phone across North America, in December. I did it from home, in pajamas. (even, dare I admit it, the ones in the afternoon.) If you wish to listen to them here are some of the links:

- [WCBQ/WHNC-AM](#) in Raleigh
- ["Cover to Cover"](#) on in Portland-The Dalles, OR
- [CJAD](#) in Montreal with Tommy Schnurmacher:

- In addition, [here is a dropbox of mp3s](#), which contains the interviews from USA Radio Network, WINT-AM (Cleveland), CFRB-AM (Toronto), and WZUS-FM (Springfield IL):

Among other events for us in 2014:

*We celebrated Michael's 80th birthday by taking family to Jamaica - an amazing trip.

*I was humbled by being given the Order of Canada - our country's highest civilian honour

*Bishop's University gave me an Honourary Doctorate of Law degree, which was incredibly moving and meaningful to me

*And on a desperately sad note, the incomparable Ralph Cosham died. He was, for many thousands of people, the voice of Three Pines, and specifically the voice of Gamache. He performed the audio books of the series, from the very first works of the first book. 'Miss Jane Neal met her maker....'

He will live forever in Three Pines, and in our imaginations, having brought the little village to life.

*On a happier note, I finished the second draft of the next Gamache book, which should be published later this year.

It was, all in all, quite a year. I imagine yours was too.

2015

On this first day of 2015 I find myself, probably naturally, wondering what the year will bring. What will I be writing about this time next year?

But then, I stop myself. And look around. At the fire in the hearth, the snow outside, Bishop asleep almost on top of Michael's feet. Michael reading Deb's latest book. The smell of coffee still in the air from breakfast. And I think - this is pretty perfect. Let's just pause here for a moment. Then move to the next peaceful moment.

This is one of the great gifts of Michael's condition. Time is meaningless to him. He lives absolutely, completely in the moment. It's amazing to see. And, for me, almost impossible to emulate. But he's taught me to try. Even if it's just for a moment.

I want to thank you for always being there for both Michael and me. For Trudy. For Ralph. For Armand and Clara and Peter.

Thank you, my friend. I hope 2015 brings lots of peaceful, loving, kind, healthy moments.

With thanks, and I know Michael would want me to say, we love you too.

Michael, Bishop and Louise

(To see the photographs used in this newsletter in a larger size [click here to see them via my website.](#))

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