ones) often attempt to define the Mennonites for their presumably outsider audience, and one could conceivably read Dueck's frequent historicizing of the Mennonites here in the same way. However, Dueck's wealth of historical information not only helps the general reader understand the course of events that led to the international dispersion of the community, but also demonstrates just how difficult it is to provide an authoritative definition of the wide-ranging and complex group of Mennonites he visits.

Menno Moto is a fascinating memoir that engages in a unique way with contemporary concerns about identity and culture, and should appeal both to scholars of Mennonite literature and life writing, as well as those concerned with current trends in the popular discourse on national and cultural identities.

Jesse Hutchison
University of Waterloo

Carla Funk, *Every Little Scrap and Wonder: A Small-Town Childhood*. Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2019. Pp. 240. Hardcover, $29.95.

It doesn't take long to notice that a poet wrote this memoir. With its "seasonal" sections, its evocative chapter titles, and its creative and nuanced writing style, Carla Funk's poetic talent radiates throughout this book. Funk's narrative comprises twenty-six chapters, each a short story in itself. Taken together, these stories make a childhood out of significant "scraps," with various threads spilling over from one piece to the next. Within the first few pages I noticed the phrases "litter-strewn fields" and "dust and dry weeds" (16) scattered across the pages, but then so were the phrases "breezy pleasure" and "air of luxury" (18). But soon I realized that more abundant than either dreary feeling or exultant whoop were the phrases "I was inside a story" and "the sound of the scissors slicing through the cloth was the beginning of something new" (18). This is not a sad book; it is a series of stories in which Funk situates herself and invites the reader to learn, along with her, to "honour the fragments, all those broken pieces," and "see them find a true design, fitting to the pattern of a bigger story" (246).

That a chronological linearity is not the intention is evident early on. After a brief historical explanation regarding her parents' families' migrations to Vanderhoof, BC (mother from Oregon and father from Saskatchewan), the story moves seamlessly from one memory to the next without concern for specific times and dates. In an

interview with Barbara Pelman, Funk explains: "I chose to leave out specific references [to] ages, primarily as a way of replicating my own childhood experience of time," which was "rooted in the passage of seasons and potent sensory impressions." And this strategy works. The reader is free to absorb these stories as the rememberings of a child, and to respond to each tableau presented as complete in and of itself.

Funk's remarkable ability to "show and not tell" is vividly apparent in her descriptions of her father and mother. She takes the reader into her dad's "shop" as she beholds the mystery that is this man-cave, where amongst a cohort of men the whisky flows and cards are played while scantily clad calendar girls cheer them on. Her curiosity drives her, but so does her desire to be close to her father: "I watched my dad's mood for signs that he might let me in. . . . I didn't care what name he called me, only that his voice was soft when he said it" (37). Contrasted with her enigmatic father in his oh-so masculine shop, Funk sees in "the kitchen window, [her] small, aproned mother," who is "stirring and slicing" (38), a reliable and comforting presence. Her mother was the devout one, the one who read to them from *Devotions for the Family*, while her father "was happiest at the centre of the noise and crowd, calling for another round of drinks" (226).

The issue of gender roles seeps into the narrative as story after story tells of women cooking and hosting baby showers while men haul logs and play cards. But the question of gender is not relegated only to the adult world. Recalling how she was compelled to play with neighbour girls and their Barbie dolls while her brother merrily chased other boys through the woods, Funk unhappily concedes that "all the way back to Genesis and that first garden, my future seemed rigged. . . . I didn't want to be a boy; I only wanted entry to a boy's world" (238–9).

Undergirding many of these stories is the assumption of religion. Both parents have Mennonite roots, but Funk's mother is the evangelical while her father places little stock in church attendance or in piety. But if religion causes any conflict between her parents, Funk's response to the issue of faith is the same as is her response to the rest of life: she is overcome with wonder. Even as she "asks Jesus into her heart," she was "like a birthday girl, floating to the centre of the story" (205). Her fascination with religion supersedes any frustration with it. Indeed, she leans into, and relishes, the mystery of faith: "everything held the possibility of God" (123).

And this wonder is manifested not so much by the kind of events remembered as by the way these events are recalled. See how she describes her mother carding wool: "The ball of wool untangled into

wisps. With each brush, the wool loosened and lifted. . . . When she dropped it into the stainless steel washtub, it seemed to hover a moment, floating on the furnace's draft" (41). The reader is transported to the basement along with Funk and her mother as the sensory experience is recollected.

What really captivated me were the onomatopoeic phrases that a poet like Funk is so very good at: "all the pregnant aunts clustered together . . . [and] rubbed their bellies, *fat with the knowledge* of how we all arrived" (29), or (after she has fallen from a height and injures herself badly), "my fingers stray across my forehead, feel the tiny divots, *and the story splits open*" (156). The poet shines through in every remembrance.

An extra dollop of appeal is added to this memoir by the stories in which Funk is the naughty girl: she usurps her friend Gloria's role as "Mary" in the Christmas pageant; she and her brother fight with a "zeal reserved only for each other"; she whispers to the sitter that the scrumptious ice cream they're eating comes from the town dump. She is feisty as a youngster, and had a story to tell even then.

All of Funk's delightful "scraps" reveal a child who wondered, and an adult who understands that "the climb and fall cut in me a promise of more to come. . . . More of me rising from the bed, from the dirt. And more of me waiting to be set right, made new" (166). Surely there are more stories coming from this thoughtful, transparent, lyrical writer.

Mary Ann Loewen
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Angeline Schellenberg, *Fields of Light and Stone*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2020. Pp. 90. Softcover, $19.99.

Dying is easy; it's elegy that's hard. This well-worn maxim about comedy can be deftly applied to the bittersweet joy of writing elegies, and ancestor poems are on many poets' list of potential subjects. Reading back across generations seems like a natural act, but especially in our age of genetic testing, it is not for the faint of heart. Who knows who's back there? And even when you know who, the question of *how* one's ancestors might have conducted themselves is enough to give many writers pause. So, full of apprehension, we sit in the present and wonder at the choices they made, what Angeline Schellenberg calls the "unfinished prayers" and lost children of our forebears (50). For us, and for others who can trace their