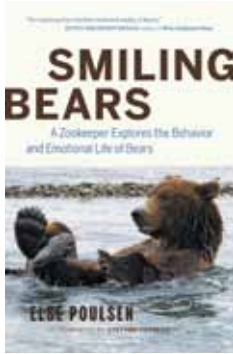


## Book Views: Buy a Book, Save a Bear

### *Smiling Bears: A Zookeeper Explores the Behavior and Emotional Life of Bears*

By Else Poulsen



Stories of animal rehabilitation can be difficult to read if they dwell on the suffering or mistreatment phase. *Smiling Bears* includes tales of bears that have had a second chance at a better life, but the book avoids “torture porn.” Instead, Else Poulsen details her work at understanding bears’ behaviour and body language in order to give captive bears as fulfilling lives as possible.

The stories of communication are breathtaking. When Poulsen thought an orphaned black bear needed mothering, she sat on the ground in the pen and rocked back

and forth while humming, as she had seen bear mothers do. The orphan immediately sat in Poulsen’s lap and made contented sounds.

Polar bear Misty liked to keep her nest clean, and when Poulsen was late providing new straw one day, Misty brought dirty straw to the window where Poulsen was passing, and dropped it onto her right paw. Poulsen responded with clean straw, then tested this communication by withholding straw for a few days. Misty again brought a mouthful of dirty straw to the window. From then on, Poulsen waited for Misty’s

request, always rewarding the message with clean straw.

There are many more fascinating stories, showing that bears have different personalities yet are able to communicate with responsive humans. You can do good by buying this book. Some of the proceeds are donated to bear rescue, rehabilitation, and conservation organizations.

Greystones Books, 2009,  
hardcover, \$29.95.

Reviewed by Gloria Hildebrandt

### *SLANT Room*

By Michael Eden Reynolds



Prize-winning poet Michael Eden Reynolds lives in Whitehorse but spent most of his childhood in Caledon. “Spring Night in Caledon” shares the sensory observations that

Spring comes up like an onion,  
green from its winter heart.

Sharp scent carried on a whiff  
of dung.

“Again” begins with “If you come to the edge of the escarpment/out of the damaged woods as I have done” and seems to mourn the loss of nature and how far we’ve come “from true forest.”

Despite his belief that “The world is not as beautiful as it was yesterday,” Reynolds can celebrate nature. In brief, spare images he suggests the annual bird migration

as “the sound of the world turning.”

His poetry is minimal, precise and egoless although his approach is intensely personal. Reynolds writes poems that resemble diamonds: small, sparkling and many faceted.

The Porcupine’s Quill, Inc., 2009,  
softcover, \$16.95.

Reviewed by Gloria Hildebrandt

### *Seeking Permanence in a New Land: Historic Houses of Grey and Bruce Counties*

by Ruth Cathcart



Grey and Bruce Counties are filled with an amazing variety of houses built over 100 years ago by early settlers. From Kincardine to Lion’s Head and Collingwood Township to Southampton, and every place in between, these architectural gems continue to intrigue day-trippers. Who built them? Why? Who lived there? Historian Ruth Cathcart has profiled 103 of the best examples of domestic architecture, ranging from the modest

to the splendid. A full-page black and white photograph, location, architectural significance and history is provided for each house along with anecdotes about the builders and residents.

*Seeking Permanence* also includes a short history of early Ontario architectural styles, a glossary of architectural terms and a comprehensive bibliography for further research. In his foreword, former librarian Andrew Armitage encour-

ages readers to study the book at home then bring it along for house watching road trips. “Ruth Cathcart invites you to take a second look at what she has selected as the best of the best,” he writes. Discovering the stories behind the stately houses in Grey and Bruce will animate the history of the region.

The Ginger Press, 2009,  
limited-edition hardcover:  
\$100; softcover: \$35.

Reviewed by Maryann Thomas