

Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STARFest Conversations series kicks off with Curtis LeBlanc March 26

St. ALBERT—STARFest is delighted to announce the addition of stimulating, year-round in-person events in 2023 with the creation of STARFest Conversations, a series of intimate Sunday afternoon author conversations at the Downtown Library. The Conversations series will feature a mix of local and visiting authors in an informal setting with free admission, and we are excited to kick it off with former St. Albertan Curtis LeBlanc on Sunday, March 26 at 2 p.m., with his hot-off-the-press new literary thriller *Sunsetter*.

“Every year, there are more accomplished authors and books than we could possibly fit into our fall festival, so we wanted to widen our events line-up with a series of cozy year-round events for all our year-round readers,” says STARFest Director Michelle Steinhusen. “We’re especially excited to kick off the Conversations series with Curtis LeBlanc, whose new thriller *Sunsetter* is getting fantastic advance praise.”

Attendees on March 26 will be among the very first to hear from LeBlanc’s latest, and will have the opportunity to buy the book at the event, before it hits bookstore shelves. *Sunsetter* is a fast-paced literary thriller that peels back the layers of small-town police corruption, drugs, and teen disillusionment to expose unlikely heroes and unexpected villains

When two teens, Dallan and Hannah, attend the opening night of the infamous *Sunsetter* rodeo, they find themselves entangled in the suspicious deaths of their two closest loved ones. Driven by loss, rage, and their gut instincts for justice, they channel their grief and confusion into uncovering the criminal truth about their small town of Perron, a prairie community that has been long deserted by industry, leaving a ghostly emptiness of abandoned gravel pits, golf courses, and storefronts.

Canada Reads finalist Michael Christie says this about the book: “*Sunsetter* is a blast of fast-paced literary fiction, tumbled up with some great characters and a searching generosity for all those left-behind towns and their left-behind people. I read this book so fast, the pages nearly couldn’t keep up.”

Curtis LeBlanc has published two books of poetry: *Little Wild* (Nightwood, 2018) and *Birding in the Glass Age of Isolation* (Nightwood, 2020). He holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of British Columbia, is the recipient of the Readers’ Choice Award in the Arc Poem of the Year competition, and has been shortlisted for *The Walrus* Poetry Prize. He’s also the co-founder and Managing Editor of Rahila’s Ghost Press. He is currently at work on a hockey memoir in essays. From St. Albert originally, LeBlanc lives in Vancouver. *Sunsetter* is his first novel.

“We’re thrilled to kick off STARFest Conversations with a writer who grew up in St. Albert,” says Steinhusen. “And we’re putting him to work while he’s in the city – Curtis is also one of our celebrity judges for Canada Reads at the Library on March 24!”

Poet Laureate Lauren Seal will host LeBlanc on March 26. The event begins at 2:00 p.m. in Forsyth Hall at the Downtown Library and will end with a book signing. Admission is free, coffee and cookies are provided. Register at sapl.ca for this event and for the popular Canada Reads @ the Library event on March 24.

STARFest Readers Festival offers a range of author events through the year: the star-studded ticketed fall festival takes place over three weeks each October. The festival also offers occasional ticketed “STARFest Presents” after-hours events throughout the year. The STARFest Conversations series will bridge these events with free, intimate author events throughout the year. Be the first to know about STARFest events and the 2023 festival by subscribing to our newsletter at www.starfest.ca.

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