



Wendy Morton's fifth book of poetry, *What Were Their Dreams? Valleys of Hope and Pain: Canada's History* began its life when she discovered, by chance, a Wrigley's 1922 B.C. Directory at Value Village. In it were listed all the towns and cities, the residents' names, and their occupations. Using the directory, she wrote a poem about Port Alberni and read it at a spoken word festival in Port Alberni. The director of the Alberni Valley Museum heard it and suggested she write poems for an upcoming exhibit celebrating the 150 year history of the valley.

Wendy looked at archival photos, read journals and created poems to be incorporated into photographs at the exhibit. She then interviewed 15 residents of the valley, including survivors of residential school. They told her their stories, brought their own photographs, and Wendy turned their stories into poems. These poems became a way for their voices to be heard. And their voices were sometimes filled with the pain of their memories. What they told her changed her: changed her understanding of the hard lives of the first European settlers who arrived in the middle of the 19th century; changed her understanding of the lives of the First Nations peoples, whose history on the west coast of Vancouver Island goes back 4000 years.

The book includes essays by Jamie Morton, B.C. historian, Jean McIntosh, director of the Alberni Valley Museum, and Cindy van Volsem, museum curator.

ISBN 978-0-88753-460-7

Black Moss Press

www.blackmosspress.com

Poetry \$16.00

Distributed in Canada and the US through LitDistCo

To receive review copies or arrange author interviews contact Marty Gervais at 519-903-2966.

*These are the simple songs of a people.
They are the found poems of
Wendy Morton. She has shaped them
from the smoke of the mills, the deep
water of the fishery, the farms, the woods,
the kitchens and the Residential Schools.
We are the names of this place. "First you
dream," she says, and with that dream
you can make a whole world.*

—Patrick Lane

DOLLY

**We took the train to Prince Rupert.
The ferry to Campbell River.
The bus to Port Alberni.
We came at night, thought
it was a hospital.
We were all strangers.
I scrubbed the pots,
scrubbed the floor,
scrubbed the stairs,
ironed the laundry.
I was quiet, I read. No one hit me.
One day, I heard yelling,
I hid, heard someone I knew fall down the stairs.
I never saw her again.
But the life before:
the gardens, game, fish, berries.
How well we lived.
Our family. Our language. Our life.**

