

**Reviews of *West of Eden: Essays on Canadian Prairie Literature*
Edited by Sue Sorensen**

West of Eden takes us to a new stage in prairie writing: we dare to rejoice: we rejoice in our abundance of writers, in our many and varied talents, in our literary accomplishments. The editor, Sue Sorensen, dares to lead us in a multi-voiced song of celebration.

Robert Kroetsch

Gems abound in this display, particularly those cut by Sorensen, Cooley, and Calder. Sue Sorensen's Introduction alone is worth the price of admission.

Kenneth G. Probert, Associate Professor, Department of English, University of Regina

*In the introduction to *West of Eden: Essays on Canadian Prairie Literature*, editor Sue Sorensen writes that "This volume prompts readers and critics to take seriously again the precise location where prairie literature is situated." Location as construed by Sorensen and the other contributors to the volume is a concept best thought of in the multiple. How we construe ourselves as prairie dwellers, we are convincingly told, is reliant on a broad range of factors, including our status as urban or rural dwellers (or from somewhere in between) our identification in terms of gender or ethnic matters, our ancestry, and our shared colonial and post-colonial history, amongst others. What makes *West of Eden* compelling, relevant, even necessary reading is its insistence that the culture of the Canadian prairies is integral to our understanding of living in this place. *West of Eden* is the most comprehensive look at prairie culture to emerge to-date out of the scholarly study of the prairie west and makes strong statements about the need to continue to critically explore ourselves and our existence in this place. This is a must-read book for anyone who reads the literature and culture of the prairies, whether student, scholar, or general reader.*

Christian Riegel, Associate Professor and Head, Department of English, Campion College at the University of Regina

Prairie persists. As a place, possibility, problem, pie-in-the-sky, personality, perturbation, prison, or paradise—the prairies continue to intrigue, baffle, and amaze anyone who pays them any mind. And, as Sue Sorensen’s collection of essays shows, people do pay them plenty of mind. All these years after prairie fell from grace, the writers in this volume show we’re still learning where to locate it, who speaks its tongues, what its languages mean, why it matters, and why this eco-people-pipedream still burns in our chests.

Daniel Coleman, Professor and Canada Research Chair, Department of English and Cultural Studies, McMaster University

“Poses a range of provocative questions about prairie writing.”

Wendy Roy, *Wascana Review*

*“[O]ffers many valuable articulations of our current moment of discovery and points, for those of us engaged in the critical project that continues to be called prairie literature, toward many more moments of discovery to come. Sorensen’s introduction is exceptional. She balances references to Guy Maddin’s *My Winnipeg*, Wallace Stegner’s *Wolf Willow*, Paul Hiebert’s *Sarah Binks*, and lyrics from *The Weakerthans* (and that’s just in the first six pages) in an engaging, personal, reflective, and rigorous piece....[T]he essays take a variety of approaches — coming at texts in terms of pedagogy, psychoanalysis, deconstruction, cultural studies, cultural materialism, formalism, linguistics, and globalization.”*

Jon Gordon, *The Goose*,
Journal for the Association for Literature, Environment, and Culture in Canada