



Canadian - First published 2015

Because of the title the Characters are the starting point:

CHARACTERS: 25 + 13 + a few more = 38 ~ 40+ — a mix of human and animal characters

1. **Otto** Vogel

“Your whole name is easy, in fact. It’s just circles and signs-of-the-cross, like your church. ...Circle, sign-of-the-cross, sign-of-the-cross, circle.” – Owen

2. **Etta** Gloria Kinnick of Deerdale farm

“She sat down, and untied her laces. The boots slid right off, wet. Her feet red with blood. Like Saint Francis, thought Etta, but she did not pray to him. She didn’t pray to anyone.”

Etta, said Otto. That’s easy to spell. Good. ...after telling Etta that Owen was going to write to him so he could write him back ...to keep up practice over there. ...Okay, she said, I can write to you.

3. **Grace** Vogel – Otto’s mother

4. **Rupert** Vogel – Otto’s father: growing up Otto had 14 brothers and sisters, 15 altogether including him.

1. Marie
2. Clara
3. Amos – ‘working the camp in Lethbridge’
4. Harriet
5. Walter – soldier
6. Wiley – soldier
7. Otto... + Russell Palmer
8. Gus – soldier
9. Winnie – Nurse or spy...Not a nurse! (C12 – Winnie calls Otto on his birthday from ‘the government home in Paris’ where she has lived for 65 years since the war. – Otto’s *deus ex machina* p271 It was in the bar, sometime around the middle of a week, sometime early evening, when the most beautiful woman Otto had everseen walked in. ...My god, he said, Winnie. ...They think you’re dead, she said, Int eh ocean somewhere. I might as well be. That’s crap. And you know it. Don’t be an idiot. Otto.
10. Ellie – 9
11. Benjii –9
12. Emmett – 8
13. Josie – 6
14. Ted – 5

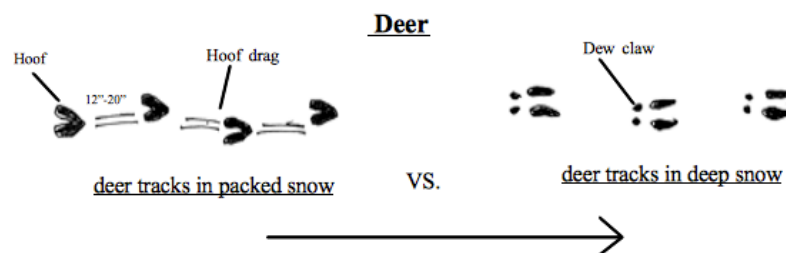
5. (Sister) **Alma Gabrielle Kinnick**– Etta’s older sister who gave birth to James Peter Kinnick “who never lived”

6. **Russell** Palmer – Grace Vogel calls him “Otto’s twin”

“There was a **coyote**, said Harriet. She ran past us and Russell got scared and let go of me and I had to turn to not run over her and Russell slipped and it wasn't his fault and it wasn't mine” – “If you watched him walk across a big space it looked as if he was waltzing with himself.” –

“**Russell was looking for deer.**” – With his father reading *Tracking and Hunting the Animals of Western Canada* when he is 6 yrs.:

I like those ones, said Russell pointing. They're like faces of rabbits. But without mouths.
Deer tracks, said his father. The whole deer family has similar tracks, all rabbit faces. See? He pointed down the list: Caribou, Elk, Moose, Roe, White-tail...
And if you find those and follow those you find a deer? asked Russell.
If you're very quiet and gentle and patient, then you just might.
Wow, said Russell.
Though there aren't many in town, I shouldn't think, said his father.
But maybe one or two?
Maybe one or two.
Wow, said Russell. Wow wow wow.



7. Molly and George – the kids who first find Etta

8. Cynthia – Otto's **kitten** who is really a **gopher**

9. Jim – The father of Alma's baby James Peter Kinnick

10. William Porter – Harriet's son

11. Owen – shared a desk with Otto at school — in love with Otto? – dies in the water in the war in Otto's arms

12. Mr. Lancaster – teacher for 10 years at Gopherlands General School who finally loses his voice

13. Marta Gloria Kinnick —Etta's mother

14. Raymond Peter Kinnick – Etta's father (newspaper editor)– “Her mother crept through the door and they, all three, realized how little it meant to know things, to know the truth of things now.”

P 174 Who's going to edit the newspapers if all the editors become farmers? said her father. Hm. I suppose if we're going to starve we might as well be able to read about it, said her mother.

15. Willard Godfree, Larger Area Superintendent of the Civic and Meta-civic Bureau Office

16. James – the coyote - “always singing...Coyotes have voices a bit like oboes; they are not unpleasant. Etta would sing along with him sometimes, and sometimes she would just listen. Mostly he sang cowboy songs.”

17. Monty and his sister Cordelia who tell Russell Monty has seen Etta — “also I saw a lady, I think, yesterday morning, I thought she was maybe a witch or maybe a lady-Santa-Claus...She was singing, I think. She was fine. She was magical.”

18. Kasia – neighbour girl from the far side of Russell’s who gives Otto a guinea pig he calls Oats and to whom he bequeaths his collection

19. Gerald – Otto’s marching partner in the war in France

20. Alistair

21. Michele – from Trois Rivieres – killed in a town in France

22. Gustav – from Selkirk – killed in a town in France

23. Lucy Perkins – Etta’s last student at Gopherlands General School

24. Giselle – p184 There was a woman called Giselle who was often around. The town or city would be different, but Giselle would be there, the same Giselle. Her hair was short and dark and she would always find Otto before he found her.

25. Bryony — the reporter in the burgundy business suit who joins Emma on her journey because she thinks she has no stories of her own

Then because it begins with Etta’s journey to the east the setting is the next point to consider:

SETTING

Saskatchewan

The Teacher’s Cottage
Gopherlands School,
Gopherlands, Saskatchewan,
Canada

Davidsdottir, Saskatchewan 3,379 kilometers away from the care home, 599 kilometers from the harbour of Halifax to which Bryony brings Etta.

Battlefields in France

Manitoba

Ontario

Quebec

New Brunswick

Nova Scotia

Rankin Inlet — post mark on a note from Russell to Otto p163

Then...there is the seemingly simple

PLOT

The prewar years – the distant past timeline

We meet the Vogel family.

Russell comes to live with the Vogels and becomes part of the family. Otto and Russell take turns attending school.

We meet the Kinnock family. Etta's sister dies in childbirth at the convent in PEI.

Etta attends teacher's college and becomes the teacher at Gopherlands where she teaches both Otto and Russell.

Owen is the seat partner for Otto and Russell but Otto takes revenge on Owen who, jealous of Russell's friendship with Otto mocks him about his injured leg.

The war and post-war years – the past timeline

Otto becomes a soldier and is sent overseas to fight in France. He asks Etta to write to him.

Otto comes home on leave and Etta, now a munitions factory worker meets him at the train.

Eight weeks after the end of Otto's leave Etta has a miscarriage while she is out with Russell.

Etta bakes things and sends them to Otto overseas.

Etta and Russell go dancing every night and become romantically involved but Etta goes to the train station to welcome Otto home and marries him.

Otto becomes a deserter after Owen dies in his arms in battle. Owen is 'saved' by his sister Winnie, a spy who ensures he is discharged and sent home bearing the scars of war, a perforated ear drum and PTSD.

After Otto has been home for a few years, Etta has another miscarriage which Russell witnesses but from a distance.

Both Russell and Otto become farmers.

The final journey – the story's present timeline although written in the past tense.

Etta decides to walk to see the water because she has never gone there. She is losing her memory.

On her journey she is soon accompanied by James the talking coyote.

Russell tracks her to make sure she is alright. Otto does not go with him because he says Etta wants to do this alone.

Etta is also tracked by the media and becomes something of a heroine/media darling for the originality of her journeying.

Russell eventually finds her but is then persuaded by her to follow his own path—to ride horseback north to find the migrating Caribou.

When Etta begins to 'lose herself' her new human companion, Bryony—accompanying Etta because even though she is a journalist she has no stories of her own—takes Etta to a hospital in New Brunswick.

While Etta is on her journey Otto uses the leftover newspaper from all the newspapers he bought with Etta's story and photograph in them to begin making papier mache animals.

He begins with a guinea pig as a companion for his new pet, the guinea pig Oats.

The last statue he makes, at the suggestion of Kasia the little girl from whom he got Oats, is a little girl which he places closest to the house with Kasia's help again. He then bequeaths the whole collection to Kasia.

The last we hear of Russell, he is seeking directions to an airport in the north with two flights out a week. [p290 And Russell drank dark coffee in an almost empty café where a man even older than him drew invisible lines on the plastic tablecloth with his finger:](#)

this road and then this road and then this road and then you'll get to the airport. Two flights a week.

Otto dies in bed stopping breathing **and then he was underwater**. As Otto is dying, Etta is walking into the Atlantic Ocean. Otto and Etta meet underwater, apologize, say good-bye and then Etta surfaces facing out away from the land.

The book ends with Etta at the train station waiting for the wind the train that Otto is on will bring when it arrives in seven minutes.

Is Otto's train the airplane that Russell is taking home or is this simply Etta's last conscious thought as she too slips underwater? (All their birthdays are more or less the same.)

The way the story is told, the way the plot unfolds:

FORM – Styles of writing - musicalized story telling

– the prose is spare, simple and unadorned. More symbolic than descriptive. Hemingway-like.

Lists including “Uses for Newspaper” – Etta's list of options after Gopherlands is closed + more

Songs

Letters – Otto writes letters to Etta that he cannot send to her because he doesn't know where she is.

Recipe cards: Cinnamon Buns, Yeast Proofing, Date Squares (Matrimonial Cake), ‘For Otto at night – Flax flowers paste’

Etta's **seating charts**

Maps – “Russell opened the glove box, just to check, but there were no maps. Of course not. He'd never had maps, never needed maps to know the way from his farm to Otto's or to town Well, east then he figured.” – then Russell buys a map of Manitoba and Western Ontario (to scale)

Radio stories p 95.

Application forms

Mailing addresses

Alternatives

...Ultimately encompasses/reveals/explores:

THEMES (10 at least)

1. Shapeshifting

Wikipedia: In mythology, folklore and speculative fiction, shapeshifting (or metamorphosis) is **the ability of a being or creature to completely transform its physical form or shape.** This is usually achieved through an **inherent ability** of a mythological creature, **divine intervention**, or the use of **magic**. The idea of shapeshifting is present in the oldest forms of totemism and shamanism, as well as the oldest extant literature and epic poems. It remains a common trope in modern

fantasy, children's literature, and works of popular culture. The most common form of shapeshifting myths is that of therianthropy, which is **the transformation of a human being into an animal or conversely, of an animal into human form**. Legends allow for transformations into plants and objects, and the assumption of another human countenance (e.g. fair to ugly).

1722 German woodcut of a werewolf transforming

Popular shapeshifting creatures in folklore are: **werewolves and vampires** (mostly of European, Canadian, and **Native American**/early American origin), the Huli jing of East Asia (including the Japanese kitsune), and the gods, goddesses, and demons of numerous mythologies, such as the Norse Loki or the Greek Proteus.

Shapeshifting to the form of a wolf is specifically known as **lycanthropy**, and such creatures who undergo such change are called lycanthropes.

Therianthropy is the more general term for human-animal shifts, but it is rarely used in that capacity. It was also common for deities to transform mortals into animals and plants.

When a form is taken on involuntarily, the thematic effect can be one of confinement and restraint; the person is bound to the new form. In extreme cases, such as petrification, the character is entirely disabled.

On the other hand, **voluntary shapeshifting can be a means of escape and liberation. Even when the form is not undertaken to resemble a literal escape, the abilities specific to the form allow the character to act in a manner that was previously impossible.**

... In many fairy tales, the hero's talking animal helper proves to be a shapeshifted human being, able to help him in its animal form.

1. **Otto** is the fox:

p8 Age 6 checking the chicken wire for fox-sized holes — I am a fox. Otto wrapped his thumb around the front of his balled fingers and moved it like a mouth, I am a fox, let me in, pressing gently, but as hard as a fox, as a fox's mouth. I am hungry, I will eat you, Otto was hungry. He almost always was.

p207 – first leave from soldiering overseas, Otto visits Russell on his farm – Otto, he said, stepping around the tractor, you're a son of a bitch for being a sneak about the whole thing, for sneaking back here all quiet like a fox, but goddam it is good to see you.

2. **James** the talking coyote is Jim, baby James, Otto the fox (???), Bryony:

As Etta and James are walking through Ontario:

p157 Etta was eating more berries and dandelions. Rationing. She was hungry all the time. That's what it's like, said James, to be a coyote. Being hungry all the time? Yes, either hungry or sleeping. But, mostly hungry. That's why we're able to kill so easily, and why humans aren't.

3. **Etta** and the talking fish skulls:

p13 With Alma in a cold snowless January when Etta was age 6, looking at fish skeletons strung out along the dry creek bed: The skulls, of course, already had holes in them, but Etta's sister didn't like to use these for jewelry. They can come back alive when they touch your skin, she said, And start talking. Leave those. Okay, said Etta, But when Alma wasn't looking she stuffed smaller skulls into her mittens,...She was holdin her mitten hands to her ears to see if she could hear them, the fish skulls....What language do fish speak? Alma was brushing dust from a beautiful rib,...Probably French, she said, Like Grandma. Etta pressed her mittens to her ears and whispered, Should I be a nun? The wind blew and the insides of her mittens said, *Non, non, non*.

p 162 Etta didn't eat the eyes. ...Etta let the spines and tails break off and float away, but she kept the skulls, smaller and softer than the one she already had. I'm sorry, she said. I am just

so hungry. *Il faut manger*, they said, one at a time, over and over. It's a long long way to go still, isn't it? *Oui oui oui oui oui*. (Meanwhile —) It took more than a week for Otto to finish [making] the deer

4. When **Etta** works the night shift to free up her days to wait for Otto at the train station she turns into a vampire:
p. 189 New girl, someone bite her. And another girl, in the regular head scarf but with bright red lipstick, grabbed Etta's arm, brought it to her mouth, and gently nipped her wrist, leaving faint teeth marks and pronounced lip marks. We're vampires, see, we night girls. So we had to make you one of us.
5. Etta is Russell's deer
6. Otto's papier mache animals watching the passing human parade become alive:
p192 During daylight hours, traffic grew thick along the single-track road, crawling like a parade, with Otto's animals, all matching in their off-white of flour and water and newsprint, like a frozen audience.
7. In the hospital that Bryony brings Etta to when Etta 'has lost herself' Etta turns into Otto:
P258 That night Etta slept and slept. Her legs and her feet and her hips all so tired, all at once. She slept through midnight, when the nurse came to check on her...through to night again. It was dark when Otto woke. ...Etta, you're up? Yes, but I'm fine, said Otto.

2. Polyandry involves marriage that includes more than two partners and can fall under the broader category of polyamory. More specifically, it is a form of polygamy, where a woman takes two or more husbands at the same time.

—Of the 1,231 societies listed in the 1980 Ethnographic Atlas, 186 were found to be monogamous; 453 had occasional polygyny; 588 had more frequent polygyny; and 4 had polyandry. Polyandry is less rare than this figure which listed only those examples found in the Himalayan mountains (28 societies).

—More recent studies have found more than 50 other societies practicing polyandry. **Fraternal polyandry** was traditionally practiced among Tibetans in Nepal, parts of China and part of northern India, in which **two or more brothers are married to the same wife**, with the wife having equal "sexual access" to them. It is associated with **partible paternity**, the cultural belief that **a child can have more than one father**.

—Polyandrous mating systems are also a common phenomenon in the animal kingdom.

p.58 We need to go find her Otto. Otto! She could die out there! She could be dead already! ...No, said Otto. No Russell I'm not going. Some husband, said Russell. Some fucking husband. ...I'll go alone then. Right now, alone. Some fucking husband. He turned around, away from Otto. It's not what she wants, Russell, said Otto, but quietly. Too quietly for Russell...

p87 Etta was wearing a sort of ivory dress suit...It was her wedding photo. Russell had taken the photo himself...That's not you, said the girl, pointing at the man in the photo, at Otto. No, said Russell, that's Otto. How strange...said the girl. (Russell and Otto are like twins)

3. Spiritual questing and the cardinal directions – the spiritual quest of the various characters symbolized by the direction of their journey

EAST

If she went east, Etta would have 3,232 kilometers to cross. ...But she would go east, Otto knew.

- Alma went east to the convent in PEI.
- Otto went east when he enlisted
- Otto and Russell go east to go home from Gopherland School

Author: Ángel Manuel Rodríguez

What biblical symbolism is associated with the four cardinal directions?

The East: The importance of the east as the main point of orientation may be related to the rising of the sun and its importance in the religions of the ancient Near East. In the Bible its symbolism emerges for the first time in Genesis. The Garden of Eden was placed in the East (chap. 2:8), and its entrance faced the east (chap. 3:24). After sinning, Adam and Eve left the garden and went toward the east (chap. 3:24). This eastward movement continued with Cain (chap. 4:16) and culminated in the movement of the human race toward the east (chap. 11:2-4). Within this context **the east is symbolically ambivalent**. The garden placed there symbolized **safety and security**. After sin, when it was the direction of the exile, it represented **a condition of alienation from God**. It was also **the place of the wilderness, from which destructive winds came, threatening life** (Ps. 48:7; Eze. 27:26). To the prophets the east was a symbol of Babylonian exile and the saving presence of God. He traveled to Babylon and ultimately redeemed His people (Eze. 10:18, 19; 11:22, 23). **The east became a place where God intervened on behalf of His people, bringing them salvation** (cf. Rev. 16:12).

The following symbolic attributes for the cardinal quadrants come from direct conveyance from Native wisdom:

Honoring the East:

Beginnings, Awakening, Ascension, Vision, Spiritual wisdom

This is where the new beginnings of creation stir at the cusp of dawn. With the rising sun, a dawning of a greater spiritual awareness envelopes us. As the new warmth presses upon us, our own divine spark ignites and we are aware of far more potential in life than ever before. In this spiritually-focused quadrant, the intangible self lives vibrantly and scintillates creative wisdom.

East – Air ~ Spring ~ Old Age ~ Wisdom ~ Completion ~ Non-attachment ~ Peace ~ Death ~ Birth ~ Inspiration

Alas, **the circle comes to a close with the direction of the east where all is released into the openness of Being**. The element that is associated with the east is the air and is so because of air's refined transparency that cannot be captured through any tangible means for it is free to go wherever the wind blows. Birds, in particular, great birds of prey, are often associated with this direction. **For here, we come to what has been referred to as eagle vision, the capacity to see the big picture from afar in a way that is clear and at the same time not attached to any specific outcome. The time of life is that of old age, for here, one's work (the north) has been completed and one's earthly responsibilities begin to lessen, which gives way to time for contemplation and the harvesting of one's wisdom of life.** In another sense, the east arrives after any period of hard work when we've done our best and come to a place where it is time to let go and relax. This is what **a true vacation is meant to be: a vacating of our involvement with the world and allowing peace and serenity to wash us clean, thus freeing our minds and letting our spirit fly.** Here, in the east, is also the realm of physical death and the great final release from life. ... Finally, the east is also the season of spring and birth because in the paradoxical nature of life, great truths are always a conjunction of opposites: **death is but one side of a single coin of which the other side is birth.** With spring, comes freshness, delicacy, lightness and potential and thus in life after a release comes new inspiration, dreams and a yearning to get back into the juiciness of the embodied life of the south. **A doorway into the east is through exploring our attachment to people, things, situations and life in general. When we contemplate such with the awareness of death and the sobering fact that we will have to let go of it all someday, it is possible to begin "lightening our grip" on life and begin to live life on life's terms. In essence, this is the heart of all great spiritual traditions; when we surrender our lives to God then we see that everything is ultimately good and just as it is suppose to be (the eagle vision of the east). Finally, this brings up a paradox: the more comfortable we are with our own death, the less we are attached to life and the freer we are to live and love unconditionally.**

— Owen lives west while Otto and Russell live east **"so it doesn't make sense for him to walk home with them even though Owen likes walking.** Otto says that because he and Russell walk slowly, Owen will become frustrated with them. Otto walks **"just the once"** with Owen when he (Otto) is drunk. **"He didn't drink much after, with Etta."**

— requirement in Gopherlands ad for new teacher: **Teach with the door closed. (Certain south-or east-facing windows optional.)**

NORTH— Russell goes north after he finds Etta: P. 144 You're here, continued Etta, because it's your turn, finally. It's sad that you felt you needed my permission for that, but, oh well. Go,

Russell, go do whatever, wherever. Go do it alone, and now, because you want to and you're allowed to and you can. You always could have if you wanted to enough. ...I'm going to trade my truck for a horse and ride north, said Russell. I'm going to find migrating caribou and follow them. And I'll meet you back home, after. And I'll meet you back home, after.

2. The North: Bible students have suggested that the north is a symbol of the permanent or the eternal, perhaps because the polar stars were permanently visible in the sky. It is the place of God's celestial dwelling (Isa. 14:13) and from which His glory descends (Job 37:22) with blessings or judgments (Eze. 1:4). He is the true King of the North. But the north—represented by the left hand—is also a symbol of disaster. The enemy of God's people came from the north (Jer. 1:14, 15; Eze. 38:6), bringing destruction. In a sense, the enemy was the false king of the north who tried to usurp God's role and is finally destroyed by the Lord (Zeph. 2:12; Dan. 11:21-45).

...The ambivalent nature of the symbols of the four cardinal directions seems based on the fact that evil was perceived to be present everywhere and that God's saving presence was always accessible to His people from any corner of the world (Ps. 139:7-12). In a sense they pointed beyond the points of the compass to the cosmic conflict between good and evil.

The following symbolic attributes for the cardinal quadrants come from direct conveyance from Native wisdom:

Honoring the North: Illumination, Discovery, Logic, Understanding, Mental wisdom

Science and knowledge accumulated through our life cycles is purified, and trickles from the tips of ice-capped mountains of wisdom. As these streams of knowing move to our awareness, we prepare for intellectual illumination. In this mentally-focused quadrant, the greatest reaches of our comprehension roll back into us, causing avalanches of deductive reason. Intellectual knowing is processed and crystallized.

North–Earth ~ Winter ~ Adulthood ~ Will ~ Manifestation ~ Responsibility ~ Wisdom of Giving ~ Nurturing

The element of the earth brings us to the north with its grounded, solid, manifesting qualities. In the Plains Indian cultures, this direction was often symbolized with the bison ... The bison was paramount to the survival of the people for it provided food, clothing, shelter and, in traditional times, was an ever present reminder of the Great Spirit's benevolence in taking care of the people. The bison hunt also afforded meaning and purpose for the human providers of the tribe and it is easy to imagine the sense of power and pride that the hunters must have felt upon returning to the tribe after a successful hunt. The season of winter is also a fitting metaphor for this direction as again in traditional times hard work was necessary to sustain the people through the time of the year when survival was the most difficult. In understanding the flow of directions in this map, it is important to remember that before the north was the west. In the west, as we saw, healing and initiation take place whereby the initiate is introduced into a larger sense of self and it is in the north that she or he must enact such out if it is to become manifest in the world. In vision quest language, this is phrased as "bringing the mountain down to the valley". It is as if in the west we are given the vision and in the north we are challenged with the task of living the truth contained in that vision. It is also understood that in doing such, the whole community benefits and essentially one's "vision" is for the sustenance of one's people. In this direction, a good question to ask is, "who are my people and whom do I serve?" As we know, to serve naturally engages our will and in the north we are called to become responsible human beings whose presence benefits others. Another way to say it is here we are challenged to respond to life with our full capacities and to simply do our best. The spiritual truth of the north reveals that when we do our best, there is support from Being and when we do less than our best there is no support, we are left on our own. It is a difficult truth, but then again, this is the direction of the winter, adulthood, responsibility and genuine mature action and the salty pragmatics of the earth element.

A doorway into the qualities of the north dimension is through an inquiry into one's will and one's capacities. Often our wills have been distorted or even castrated through early childhood experiences that wounded our esteem and sense of confidence in being who we are in the world with our capacities and limitations. People often have either a grandiose or deficient sense of their capacities, neither is true. The north asks us simply what we can and cannot do, no more and no less! Here is where the courage to do our best comes in, for it is in our best that the presence of the north begins to emerge and flow with a guidance and purpose that is not of our own doing, this is sometimes referred to as "doing God's will". The poet Goethe speaks of this when he says, "when one commits oneself fully, all sorts of things occur that otherwise would have not, providence moves with us and such boldness has magic, power and genius in it". Again, it is

important to remember we are human and thus limited in our capacities and part of the north teaching is about clearly seeing our limitations and appreciating them, thus tempering our personality with humility.

4. Human 'connectness'

All moving together, all fighting together, And even though everything was horrible, that thing, that connectness, was wonderful.– Otto writing to Etta

Dream sharing

p. 48 “She dreamt of water. And boats and boys and men and boys, breathing in the water, spitting out the water, and everything loud and so much color, but darkened and getting darker and this is no place for a woman you better get down, down, deeper, deeper, deeper and the water lapped her feet and ankles, warmer than you’d expect, rhythmic, comforting. But I am not a woman, she reassured herself, but I am strong and surviving. When Etta woke the next morning there was a coyote licking and licking and licking her feet...Hello, said Etta...Are you helping me or eating me? That night James did not eat Etta...When the were both done (eating), they started walking again, East, always east, Come along, James, said Etta. *Yes, yes, coming,* said James. Will you be joining me for the entire journey, you think? *We’ll see.*

Conversation:

- Greeting and saying good-bye
- Saying please and thank you
- Apologizing

Creativity:

- Singing and dancing
- Telling stories
- Photography – its power and its dangers – Otto buys all the newspapers with Etta’s photo and then to use them up starts to make papier mache animals
 - o Etta’s wedding photo
 - o Otto’s official soldier photo
 - o Etta’s class photo of herself as teacher in front of the school with the students
- 3D Sculpture namely papier mache
- Baking and cooking

5. Human imperfection and vulnerability

- Injured legs
- Injured ears
 - p286 Once she had gone, Otto waited, counted to a hundred and down again, then sat up and reached across his legs to the envelope that held his chart. ...Inside was his name, rank, unit, hometown, and condition: Severe Ruptured Eardrum and Psychological shock/Trauma.
- Undefined, unacceptable sexuality
 - Gerald re Owen: p267 He’s a funny one, you know, said Gerald. I wouldn’t spend too much time too close to him. I know, said Otto. Don’t worry. I know.
- Uncertainty of feelings and understanding– *Maybe*
- p111 *I’m sorry,* says Otto. Etta looks up, away from the kettle. Otto taps his finger against the newspaper. *I’m sorry, I’m so sorry,* he says. *You should have stayed with Russell. This would not have happened with Russell.* Etta walks across to him, looks over his shoulder at his hand on the paper. *Maybe,* she says. She sits in the chair next to him,

next to the good ear. *But it's too late now, isn't it. ...Etta, he says, Do you think this happened because you still love him? Maybe, says Etta. She points at the circle. Maybe.*

- p265 Russell on a round flat rock with the old woman who was tiny with wrinkles like fireworks around her eyes. She wore a skin and fur coat that blended into her own white hair. She had her hand on his shoulder. THE HERD SHOULD COME FROM OVER THERE TODAY, she shouted. ...YOU HAVE NO WIFE? she shouted. NO, shouted Russell, YOU'RE HAPPIER ALONE, LIKE ME, MAYBE, she shouted. YES, shouted Russell. YES. MAYBE.
- p270 Owen is dead before Otto can put him down. There is no quiet place to put him. ...His eyes are open. Otto knows he's supposed to close them, but he can't. He leaves the eyes open. It's my fault, he says. And, even though Owen is dead, he says, *It, isn't*. And Otto says, *It is*. And Owen says, *Maybe*. And then Otto's ear flashes white through his head and down his whole body and he wants to kiss Owen but he doesn't and instead he runs, ...[past where he had camped], away and away and away.

6. The four elements and the human and animal experience of them all

Earth = Dust
Air = Wind
Fire = Fire
Water = Water

7. Walking

- The boys walk home from school
- The children walk the farm and the fields
- Otto marches into battle and from battleground to battleground
- Etta walks to work in the munitions factory
- Russell tracks animals especially deer, and he tracks Etta
- Etta walks to see the water

—a pilgrimage to pay homage to the people she has loved, her sister, the baby James, Otto and all the 'boys and men'

[pilgrimage](#)

noun

1. a journey, especially a long one, made to some sacred place as an act of religious devotion: a pilgrimage to Lourdes.

2. Islam. the Pilgrimage, hajj. 'umrah.

3. any long journey, especially one undertaken as a quest or for a votive purpose, as to pay homage: a pilgrimage to the grave of Shakespeare.

votive: consisting of or expressing a religious vow, wish, or desire :
offered or performed as an expression of thanks or devotion to God.

verb

4. to make a pilgrimage.

- and she has companions on her pilgrimage who also walk and care for her: James (who is Otto the fox in coyote get-up?), and Russell, and Bryony (in her burgundy suit with no personal story to tell who is maybe Alma?) [God gives us what we need.]

8. Transporting

- an exploration of our transition from the agrarian, rooted, stay-in-one-place purposeful prairie to industrial, busy-but-pointlessly-so, modern urbanity
- horses, trucks, tractors, trains, buses, airplanes

9. Bodily functions, especially hunger

10. Teaching

- loving to teach
- needing and loving to be taught
- the love that binds teachers and their students
- the shapeshifting that comes from learning

LEM SUMMARY

—Einstein once said, "Nothing happens until something moves."

—Some concepts to consider:

Counterpoint

focuses on melodic interaction—only secondarily on the harmonies produced by that interaction. In the words of John Rahn: It is hard to write a beautiful song. It is harder to write several individually beautiful songs that, when sung simultaneously, sound as a more beautiful polyphonic whole. The internal structures that create each of the voices separately must contribute to the emergent structure of the polyphony, which in turn must reinforce and comment on the structures of the individual voices. The way that is accomplished in detail is... 'counterpoint'.^[3]

Arabesque

1 *Ballet* A posture in which one leg is extended backwards at right angles, the torso bent forwards, and the arms outstretched, one forwards and one backwards.

2 An ornamental design consisting of intertwined flowing lines, originally found in ancient Islamic art:

3 *Music* A passage or composition with fanciful ornamentation of the melody.

Fugue

noun

1. a contrapuntal composition in which a short melody or phrase (the subject) is introduced by one part and successively taken up by others and developed by interweaving the parts.

2. a state or period of loss of awareness of one's identity, often coupled with flight from one's usual environment, associated with certain forms of hysteria and epilepsy.

— A **seemingly** simple story of three intertwined human lives from childhood through old age to their ends—of how their love for one another both enriches their lives and at the same time constricts/restricts/shapes their individuality. Summarizing it involves disentangling the timelines tightly interwoven in 20 chapters, each of which is composed of a number of short compositions punctuated by *arabesque* ornamentation. The magic, the beauty of this book—perfectly echoing its theme of the empowerment and entrapment of human connectness— is in the intertwining. There are three main timelines: the pre-war past, the wartime past, and the old age present, which is the main plot of the story which, in turn, is a variation on the main plot of each of the timelines. Generally each timeline unfolds sequentially. We come to experience the characters and the incredible depths of their connection through this *counterpoint* of the timelines. In effect this amazing book can be likened to a narrative fugue, a theme and variations full of the richness and beauty and plenitude of life. A tribute to Canada, to our plain-spoken, hard-working, loyally connected and dutiful forebears, and to the magic of the land in all its bountiful, challenging and rigorous glory. A brilliant work—a poem-like, seminal myth masterfully conceived and flawlessly rendered.

http://musanim.com/watch_mam.html - visualized animated music

