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What the Bear Said: Skald Tales from New Iceland by **W.D. Valgardson**

A land of volcanoes, geothermal pools, and barren wilderness, Iceland is full of mists and mystery. For a thousand years, its inhabitants passed down oral histories full of fantastical fables as a way to understand their strange land. For settlers escaping starvation in the wake of volcanic eruptions, Manitoba's Interlake area held further mystery.

In this collection of stories, W.D. Valgardson creates new legends, capturing the settlers' experience in New Iceland: how they tried to explain the unexplainable, and preserve the memories of loved ones for future generations. Blurring lines between reality and fantasy, Valgardson continues the Icelandic folk-legend tradition.

About the Author



Photo by J.O. Magnusson

W. D. Valgardson is a novelist, short story writer, and poet. Born in Winnipeg and raised in Gimli, Manitoba, he completed his BA at United College, a BEd at the University of Manitoba, and an MFA at the University of Iowa. He was a professor of writing at the University of Victoria in British Columbia. Recently, he was the editor of *Lögberg-Heimskringla*, the Icelandic Community newspaper in Canada. Valgardson lives and writes in Victoria.

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An Excerpt from *What the Bear Said*

One day the smell of the fish brought another bear. The cub was on the rock. She turned, stood at her full height and roared. The black bear charged forward. They fought, forelegs locked, each biting, trying for a crippling hold. They broke the hold, then slashed at each other again. Finally, the intruder retreated, sulking on the beach for awhile before leaving.

While they'd fought, Gusti had poled the skiff forward until it was hard against the rock. If the fight had gone against the sow, he'd been ready to take the cub. Victorious, the sow stood, licking her bleeding shoulder. That was when he thought something, although later, he could not have told you exactly what he thought, and she stopped licking, turned her head and looked into his face. Ink falling into water, was the only way he could explain it, but this time turbulent, as if the water were moving and the ink, thick, holding together longer.

We hope you will consider reviewing *What the Bear Said*. If you would like to arrange an interview with W.D. Valgardson, or for more information, please contact:

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