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FEB. 28, 2017 | 034-17

Writer in Residence Ashley Little to spend week at Laurier Brantford campus

BRANTFORD – Young Adult fiction writer Ashley Little will spend the week of Feb. 27–March 3 at Wilfrid Laurier University’s Brantford campus. Little is serving as Laurier’s latest [Edna Staebler Writer-in-Residence \(WIR\)](#) from January to April 2017.

Little’s novels are both populated by, and written for, young adults. Rather than providing stories that merely entertain or offer young adult readers some type of escape from their struggles, Little’s novels — such as *The New Normal* (Orca, 2013) and *Anatomy of a Girl Gang* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2013) — plunge readers into the chaotic, complex, terrifying, beautiful and often-violent world of emerging adulthood.

“Ashley’s visit to Brantford is incredibly valuable; not just because of the quality of her writing, but also because her subject matter has so much cross-over with Brantford programs,” said Michael Ackerman, assistant professor of English and member of the WIR committee. “Because her novels often deal with young adults navigating their way through illness, loss, drug addiction, racism, crime, poverty and abuse, students in Health Studies, Criminology, Psychology, Youth & Children, Law & Society and, of course, English, will find Little’s work both insightful and deeply moving.”

Little is a featured writer at the Brantford Public Library and will be holding a book reading and signing at the library’s main branch on Colborne St. for her fourth novel, *Niagara Motel* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2016) on Wednesday, March 1, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Her community talk, titled “Place as Character: Moving Beyond Landscape and Into Genius Loci,” will take place on March 2, from 4 – 5:30 p.m. in room 110 of the Odeon Building, 50 Market St. The event is free and open to the public.

In her talk, Little will offer a glimpse into her own creative process as the author of four published novels, illustrating how she has tried to rethink the role of setting in fiction as something that can become a character in itself. Her books offer readers immersive, vivid experiences of geographical locations such as Niagara Falls and Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside. She will discuss the impact of spending time walking the streets and interacting with people and architecture, and how the daily rhythms of these places allow her to transform the setting from mere background into something that helps readers get in touch with the “spirit of place.”

In addition to her public talks, Little will hold office hours to meet with students and faculty from 2 to 4 p.m. on Feb. 28, March 1, and March 2 in room 207 of the SC Johnson Building, 38 Market St. Appointments can be booked directly with the author by emailing her at alittle@wlu.ca. She will also be working on a new novel, *BIG ME: A Story of a Teenage Giant*, while at Laurier.

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Little received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing and Film Studies from the University of Victoria and a Master in Fine Arts in Creative Writing from the University of British Columbia. Her first novel, *PRICK: Confessions of a Tattoo Artist* (Tightrope, 2011), was a finalist for the ReLit award and optioned for film.

The New Normal won the Sheila A. Egoff Children's Literature Prize. *Anatomy of a Girl Gang* won the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize, was a finalist for the City of Vancouver Book Award, was long-listed for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award and has been optioned for television. Her fourth novel, *Niagara Motel*, was released in October 2016 and her fifth novel, *Confessions of a Teenage Leper*, is forthcoming. Her work has been translated into Croatian, Korean and Italian.

Little has served as writer-in-residence for the Vancouver Public Library and the Alexandra Writers Centre Society in Calgary, Alberta. She has lived in Ontario, Alberta, Vancouver Island and in the Okanagan Valley.

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