

**and season debuts today.** Dear Diary, Do you know at it's like to look into the innocent eyes of a hopeful year-old reality TV challenger and say the words, "You've been eliminated from the competition?" Of course you don't, you're a diary. Let me tell you though, being the mini-nominated host of an acclaimed series isn't as easy

as a simple, non-Gemini-nominated civilian would think. I hate being the bearer of bad news. When our family hamster died I spent weeks changing her food and telling people she was just exhausted. Shooting *In Real Life* has been a total blast but it's that brutal send-off scene I could do with-

vincing a TV producer to lose an element of drama is like trying to steal a bottle of Jack Daniels from Mel Gibson. I guess I'm starting to understand why Tyra Banks always has a tiny hint of crazy in her eyes. *National Post*



## TOP CANADIAN SINGLES

There's a new debate in Canada and it's got nothing to do with Parliament Hill. A new book by author and "music nerd" Bob Mersereau ventures into the risky territory of listing the Top 100 Canadian singles of all time, with American Woman by The Guess Who at top spot. Who's on it, how they rank and perhaps especially who's not there are sure to heat up the atmosphere at water coolers from Cape Spear to Kelowna. "If one of your own favourites is not on this list," Mersereau writes in his introduction to *The Top 100 Canadian Singles*, "go ahead and fight among yourselves. Call me names; I can take it." Here are the Top 50. For the full list, visit [theampersand.ca](http://theampersand.ca).

1. *American Woman*, The Guess Who
2. *Heart of Gold*, Neil Young
3. *The Weight*, The Band
4. *Summer of '69*, Bryan Adams
5. *Hallelujah*, Leonard Cohen
6. *Born to Be Wild*, Steppenwolf
7. *If You Could Read My Mind*, Gordon Lightfoot
8. *Takin' Care of Business*, Bachman Turner Overdrive
9. *Four Strong Winds*, Ian and Sylvia
10. *Snowbird*, Anne Murray
11. *Big Yellow Taxi*, Joni Mitchell
12. *Tom Sawyer*, Rush
13. *Try*, Blue Rodeo
14. *New Orleans Is Sinking*, Tragically Hip
15. *The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald*, Gordon Lightfoot
16. *Suzanne*, Leonard Cohen
17. *Life Is a Highway*, Tom Cochrane
18. *These Eyes*, Guess Who
19. *Sundown*, Gordon Lightfoot
20. *Underwhelmed*, Sloan
21. *Up On Cripple Creek*, The Band
22. *Let Your Backbone Slide*, Maestro Fresh Wes
23. *Tired of Waking Up Tired*, The Diodes
24. *The Spirit of Radio*, Rush
25. *Oh What a Feeling*, Crowbar
26. *High School Confidential*, Rough Trade
27. *Echo Beach*, Martha and the Muffins
28. *Sweet City Woman*, Stampeders
29. *Wake Up*, Arcade Fire
30. *If I Had \$1,000,000*, Barenaked Ladies
31. *Lindberg*, Robert Charlebois
32. *I'm an Adult Now*, The Pursuit of Happiness
33. *Nothin'*, Ugly Ducklings
34. *Coax Me*, Sloan
35. *Closer To the Heart*, Rush
36. *Picture My Face*, Teenage Head
37. *Shakin' All Over*, The Guess Who
38. *Signs*, Five Man Electrical Band
39. *Lost Together*, Blue Rodeo
40. *Sonny's Dream*, Ron Hynes
41. *The Safety Dance*, Men Without Hats
42. *Claire*, Rheostatics
43. *One Fine Morning*, Lighthouse
44. *(Make Me Do) Anything You Want*, A Foot In Coldwater
45. *Sunglasses at Night*, Corey Hart
46. *Working For the Weekend*, Loverboy
47. *Raise a Little Hell*, Trooper
48. *Rise Up*, Parachute Club
49. *Black Velvet*, Alannah Myles
50. *Seasons In the Sun*, Terry Jacks

*National Post*

*Postmedia News*



ILLUSTRATION BY SARAH LAZAROVIC

# Vexed by The Ex

This week, we'll be featuring excerpts from five finalists for the 36th annual Toronto Book Awards. The winner will be announced on Oct. 14. Today: *The Ex* overwhelms in Lauren Kirshner's *Where We Have to Go*.

Dad and I got off the streetcar at the Exhibition Loop and walked along the teeming platform. I smelled suntan lotion as people rushed by us, their faces gleaming like olives, their hair slicked back from the heat. Every small detail pierced me: how the humidity made curls at the temples of the beautiful Italian women, and the soil-scented teenaged boys swaggered and mopped their faces with bandanas. Elbows jostled into my ribs and I struggled to keep up with Dad. He was walking with a postman's purposeful stride, his arms pumping speed.

In the midway, the air was a combination of candy-corn sweet and diesel exhaust. Stalls were selling hot dogs, popcorn, and cotton candy, and the coloured flags strung up between electricity poles were blowing softly, inhaling and exhaling, like wind-filled clothes on a laundry line. The Conklin man logo was everywhere, the down face with its curly hair and exclamation-mark nose, the mouth a half-interested lipsticked leer. We passed a man outside a small, outhouse-shaped booth. He wore a sign that said — Lucy.

No.

It said, Lucky People Line Up Here.

We were waiting in line for the Cosmic Spinner when I felt a wormy stripe of pain, a yellow ache, moving through my chest and choking me.

"Dad," I said, "I need to sit down."

We found a bench and we ate our pears, the juice running down our chins. Tattooed men with neon pink tans and big-armed wives passed by, children straggling behind noisily like tin cans. I panted. I watched the line for Cosmic Spinner lengthen, loop around the side of the ride.

"You look very white," Dad said. His hand floated up to my forehead. "It's so hot out here that I can't even tell."

But I was cold. I brought my arms in close to me and tried to concentrate on the green wool of my cardigan, but I couldn't hold my attention on it. I kept

looking down. The pavement shone as if it had been freshly tarred. The bench rocked like a Ferris wheel gondola.

"I'm okay."

Dad pointed somewhere. "There's the food building. I'm going to get my Billie Bee honey and buy you a drink. What kind do you want? Sprite?"

Forward and then an inch back, I pressed the sole of my shoe against the ground to steady myself. "A fizzy water. Please."

Dad went to buy my drink and his one-dollar honey in a plastic squeeze bottle in the shape of a bear. I told him I'd wait in front of the Tiny Tom Donuts kiosk if I didn't stay on the bench. As soon as he left, I drew myself up and walked the thirty feet to the donut stand. Hypnotically, the wet and squishy mini donuts rolled along a metal belt before dropping into a sea of boiling oil. I kept repeating this sentence to myself, as if it were my compass: "Dad is in the Food Building." I stood in front of the kiosk for a long time, watching the passersby, their big teeth, the brims of their straw sunhats. I listened to the call of the barkers getting louder and shriller, the slinky spinning sound of the roulette wheel. A new feeling was going through me. It wasn't so much wobbliness, or a head sickness, or nausea, but a desire to reach out and kiss someone, to hold on to them. I didn't care if I looked crazy, all I wanted was for someone to hold me; their arms would slow everything down. But I didn't move. I couldn't. I just kept watching those happy teeth and sunhat brims and swollen knuckles and red fingernails and cartons of caramel corn, the insides of the kernels dark like dirty molars — and then I was on the ground. ■ Tomorrow: Mark Sinnett's *The Carnivore*. Excerpted from *Where We Have to Go* by Lauren Kirshner. Copyright © Lauren Kirshner, 2009. Published by McClelland & Stewart Ltd. and reprinted with permission.

## 2010 Toronto book awards



**Seán Cullen**  
*The Prince of Neither Here Nor There*  
Puffin Canada



**Cary Fagan**  
*Valentine's Fall*  
Cormorant Books Inc.



**Lauren Kirshner**  
*Where We Have to Go*  
McClelland & Stewart Ltd.



**Mark Sinnett**  
*The Carnivore*  
ECW Press



**Dragan Todorovic**  
*Diary of Interrupted Days*  
Random House Canada

Established by Toronto City Council in 1974, the Toronto Book Awards honour authors of books of literary or artistic merit that are evocative of Toronto. The annual awards offer \$15,000 in prize money.

## Get a new read on Toronto

Meet the authors, hear their stories and read their work.

### Meet the Finalists

Book reading event  
Tuesday, October 5  
7 p.m.  
Yorkville Branch  
22 Yorkville Avenue

### Toronto Book Awards Reception

Announcement of the 2010 winner  
Thursday, October 14  
6 p.m.  
Hosted by Matt Galloway, CBC Radio  
Cash bar  
7 p.m.  
Awards presented by Mayor David Miller  
The Appel Salon at the Toronto Reference Library  
789 Yonge St.

[toronto.ca/book\\_awards](http://toronto.ca/book_awards)  
[torontopubliclibrary.ca/tba](http://torontopubliclibrary.ca/tba)

TORONTO

In partnership with the  
TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY