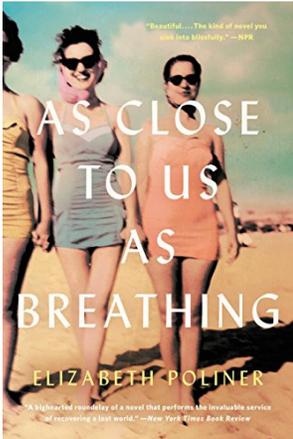


# DJC READING CIRCLE

## 2016/2017 SEASON

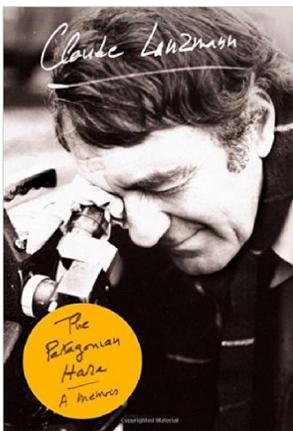


**Tuesday, November 15, 2016**  
**AS CLOSE TO US AS BREATHING** by **ELIZABETH POLINER**  
 Facilitated by **CYNTHIA GOOD**

A multigenerational saga about the long-lasting reverberations of one tragic summer in a sprawling but close-knit Jewish family. A small stretch of the Woodmont, Connecticut, shoreline has long been a summer destination for Jewish families. When a terrible accident occurs in 1948, as seen through the eyes of twelve-year-old Molly, Bagel Beach, as it was affectionately named, becomes the setting for a tragedy and its aftermath, of expanding lives painfully collapsed.

Elizabeth Poliner is a masterful storyteller, a brilliant observer of human nature and, in *As Close to Us as Breathing*, she has created an unforgettable meditation on grief, guilt, and the boundaries of identity and love.

Cynthia Good is director of the Creative Book Publishing Program at Humber College, and former president of Penguin Group (Canada). She has taught in both the Ryerson University and Centennial College publishing certificate programs, and has been a featured speaker on cultural, literary, and business subjects at many universities and colleges across Canada.

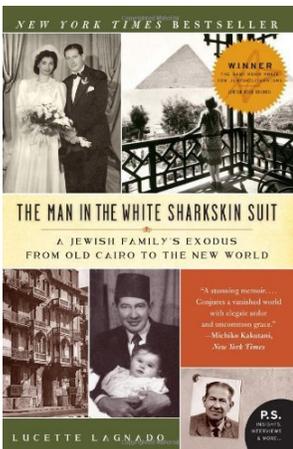


**Thursday, January 19, 2017**  
**THE PATAGONIAN HARE** by **CLAUDE LANZMANN**  
 Facilitated by **SUSAN SACHS**

In these pages, Lanzmann composes a hymn to life that flows from memory yet has the rhythm of a novel, as tumultuous as it is energetic. "Even if I lived a hundred lives, I still wouldn't be exhausted." These words capture the intensity of the experiences of Claude Lanzmann, a man whose acts have always been a negation of resignation: a member of the Resistance at sixteen, a friend to Jean-Paul Sartre and a lover to Simone de Beauvoir, and the director of one of the most important films in the history of cinema, *Shoah*.

*The Patagonian Hare*, a number-one bestseller in France, has been translated into Spanish, German, Italian, Hebrew, Polish, Dutch, and Portuguese. Claude Lanzmann's brilliant memoir has been widely acclaimed as a masterpiece, was hailed as "a true literary and historic event" in the pages of *Le Monde*, and was awarded the prestigious Welt-Literaturpreis in Germany.

Presenter Susan Sachs was foreign editor at the *Globe and Mail*. She has worked for the *New York Times* and *Newsday*, and was based in Egypt, Iraq, and Russia. She taught journalism in Paris at the Paris Institute of Political Studies.

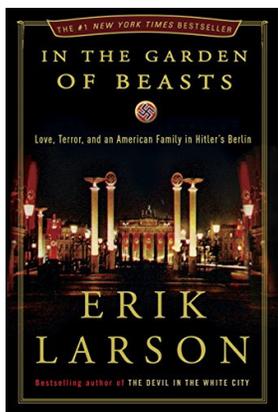


**Wednesday, March 8, 2017**  
**THE MAN IN THE SHARKSKIN SUIT** by **LUCETTE LAGNADO**  
 Facilitated by **KALMAN WEISER**

Lucette Lagnado's father Leon is a successful Egyptian businessman and boulevardier who, dressed in his signature white sharkskin suit, makes deals and trades at Shepherd's Hotel and at the dark bar of the Nile Hilton. After the fall of King Farouk and the rise of the Nasser dictatorship, Leon loses everything and his family is forced to flee, abandoning a life once marked by beauty and luxury to plunge into hardship and poverty, as they take flight for any country that would have them. A vivid, heartbreaking, and powerful inversion of the American dream, Lucette Lagnado's unforgettable memoir is a sweeping story of family, faith, tradition, tragedy, and triumph set against the stunning backdrop of Cairo, Paris, and New York.

Winner of the Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature and hailed by the *New York Times Book Review* as a "brilliant, crushing book", and the *New Yorker* as a memoir of ruin "told without melodrama by its youngest survivor", *The Man in the White Sharkskin Suit* recounts the exile of the author's Jewish Egyptian family from Cairo in 1963 and her father's heroic and tragic struggle to survive his "riches to rags" trajectory.

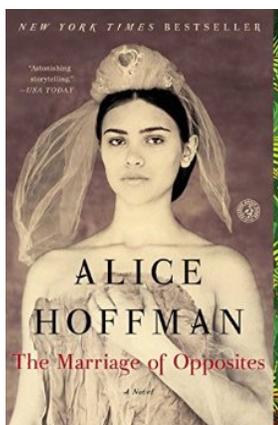
Kalman Weiser is the Silber Family Professor of Modern Jewish Studies at York University, where he has taught courses in the areas of modern and Eastern European Jewish history and culture since 2002. His most recent book, *Jewish People, Yiddish Nation*, won the 2012 Canadian Jewish Book Award for scholarship. He is currently researching the relationships between ethnic German scholars of Yiddish who became Nazi researchers and their Jewish colleagues before and after the Holocaust.



**Sunday, April 23, 2017**  
**IN THE GARDEN OF THE BEASTS by ERIK LARSON**  
**Facilitated by DEREK PENSLAR**

Erik Larson, a NY Times bestselling author (*Devil in the White City*), has written a page-turner about a US diplomat and his family posted in Berlin in 1933, a turning point in history. William E. Dodd, America's first ambassador to Hitler's Nazi Germany, watches with alarm as Jews are attacked, the press is censored, and drafts of frightening new laws begin to circulate. At the same time, Dodd's daughter Martha is entranced by the parties and pomp, and has one affair after another, including with the first chief of the Gestapo, Rudolph Dies. But as evidence of Jewish persecution mounts, Ambassador Dodd is horrified; he telegraphs to a State Department that is largely indifferent. This is a dazzling book that speaks volumes about the why the world did not recognize the Nazi threat until it was too late.

Derek Penslar, our ever-popular presenter, teaches Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto and now at Harvard. Reading Circle regulars are always impressed by his knowledge, enhanced by an exceptional sense of humour.



**Thursday, May 25, 2017**  
**THE MARRIAGE OF OPPOSITES by ALICE HOFFMAN**  
**Self Facilitated**

Rachel, mother of impressionist painter Camille Pissarro, grew up on the idyllic island of St. Thomas in a tight knit refugee community of Jews who had escaped the Inquisition. When her nephew Frederic arrives from Paris, they begin a scandalous affair. Set in lush, exquisite beauty, the marriage of Rachel and Frederic is an unforgettable story of an extraordinary woman and her forbidden love.

"A work of art" (*Dallas Morning News*), *The Marriage of Opposites* showcases the beloved, bestselling Alice Hoffman at the height of her considerable powers. "Her lush, seductive prose, and heart-pounding subject ... make this latest skinny-dip in enchanted realism ... the Platonic ideal of the beach read" (*Slate.com*). Once forgotten to history, the marriage of Rachel and Frédéric "will only renew your commitment to Hoffman's astonishing storytelling" (*USA TODAY*).

## ABOUT THE DJC READING CIRCLE

Now in its fourteenth glorious year, the Danforth Jewish Reading Circle is a favourite among our book loving members, bringing us together throughout the year for interesting and animated discussions about a variety of books that touch on Jewish themes. And of course, when we're done there's always a little *nosh*. After all, this is a Jewish book group!

The Danforth Jewish Reading Circle is open to all – no charge for members, \$10 for non-members. An **RSVP** is necessary as we have to cap our numbers in order to continue meeting in the warmth and intimacy of fellow DJC members' homes. To attend a meeting, all you have to do is drop us a line at [djcReadingCircle@gmail.com](mailto:djcReadingCircle@gmail.com) – but please do so early. Space fills up quickly and names are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. You will receive a confirmation email with time and place details. Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or comments.

Reading Circle dates and book descriptions are available on the DJC website events calendar, so be sure to visit us at [djctoronto.com](http://djctoronto.com).

Happy Reading!  
DJC Reading Circle Organizing Committee