



**the plotline bomber of innisfree**

**josh massey**

FIRST EDITION

Copyright © Josh Massey, 2015

The production of this book was made possible through the generous assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council.



Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts  
du Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

50 YEARS OF ONTARIO GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF THE ARTS  
50 ANS DE SOUTIEN DU GOUVERNEMENT DE L'ONTARIO AUX ARTS



All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

PRINTED IN CANADA



A **bundled** eBook edition is available  
with the purchase of this print book.

CLEARLY PRINT YOUR NAME ABOVE IN UPPER CASE

**Instructions to claim your eBook edition:**

1. Download the BitLit app for Android or iOS
2. Write your name in **UPPER CASE** above
3. Use the BitLit app to submit a photo
4. Download your eBook to any device

*Tonight and forever the Wapiti move thru  
water hemlock  
and bend their necks into the soil of the lower plain.*  
—Ebbe Borregaard, 1957

## Pipeline Controversy Erupts

—18 September 2036—

The Canadian State Department has sanctioned stage three in Pipe Nexus expansion. The collective announcement came today from the parliamentary committee assessing the project.

“It was a difficult decision, but we believe in the case of this particular Gasbro pipeline that the dangers are outweighed by the necessity of increased ethical flow to foreign markets,” said today’s committee report.

The decision comes in the wake of a one million litre spill from an older Gasbro wooden pipeline on the Squashington border which officials say is being mopped.

The third major east-to-west project of its kind since the 2006 Pan-Phallus Extender, Pipe Nexus 3 will extend 1,600 kilometres from the province of Cowberta through PC Columbia on its way to tanker docks in the testy river valleys of the northwestern coast. The goal is to facilitate transport of bitumenlite to the rapidly expanded Wenese/ Canadian Processing Alliance Outlet overseas and the South Polar

Civilization Initiative. Pipe Nexus 3 is a supposed advancement in high-pressure transport, and the new three ply pipes are capable of transporting quintuple the bitumenlite as traditional conduits: approximately two million barrels a day. The \$20 billion project – which never received major opposition due to a media hush and protest chill – will commence construction in May, 2037.

Opponent Jim Rutherford of Animal Alliance has called the proposed pipeline “an idiot attempt to trapeze through one of the most treacherous and fragile environments on the planet and birth canals of the oceans’ salmon supply.”

Cassandra Jeremiah of *Skeptic City TV*, on the other hand, calls the project a necessary step towards avoiding a tenth consecutive recession: “We are, in this day and age, capable of performing these operations much less invasively. There is no reason why human technology and the green world cannot merge through integrated systems cooperation.”

Visit *Troutsource* frequently over the days and months ahead for the latest developments in this story. As an independent news source, “we release the gag and let silenced tongues wag.”

o

In the district county of Enderbee, farther into the mountain corridors than the town of Byzantium and farther than media can go, on my thousand-acre elk ranch called Innisfree—that's where you will find me, Jeffery Inkster, with the elk I serve and the elk who serve me.

Mnemosyne I and Hyperion I were the first animal settlers in this part of Enderbee. Me, the first human settler, I am the humble elk servant with alfalfa feed. All I ask of the elk is their velvet antlers, and all they want from me is food, a fair ration of freedom, and the worship they deserve.

The animal tourists always want to know about predation on elk and elk mating practices. They want to know, for instance, how a Hyperion licks a Mnemosyne from croup to withers before mounting. I like to tell the animal tourists that elk know much more about foreplay than most peoples. As for predation, well, that will most likely come up later on in this tour.

o

People started calling me Mr. Happy Man, and coming to the farm, and now I give tours, plant the bean rows, sit on the steps of my newly finished porch, and I tell visitors about processes involving the land. Such as the powers of controlled daydream, how someone can nap before they go down to the secret river of our property, and imagine fish tails forming a doily pattern as they doze. Of course they'll never know who's going to catch the three-spined stickleback when they wake up and go down to that river, but they will know where to place the silver spoon when they dine with the antlered Titans.

Imagine an elk, I might say, who dolphin-leaps over the counter at an emerald-hued café. You can tell by the falling-human-shaped velvet antlers of a second elk beside the soda machine that things are a certain way, that somebody like me, who was born in a wet, readerly city in the lower Northwest, can land in a rancher's life.

Some people have a harder time with the imagining, others find more difficulty in the doing, but at Innisfree ranch those actions are one, which is a beautiful, beautiful thing to see.

o

During the halfway break of this most recent tour, the first week of the season, two kids came running through the pines, gripping a sizeable elk rack, each by a tine. When they saw the rest of the group waiting by the wagon, they did a one-handed bugle—bugling being one of the lessons we teach on the wagon tour. The antlers that weren't harvested for velvet, and that aren't gnawed through by mice, show up as lucky finds on the spring tours. I showed the kids where to fit the rack on a big hive of antlers in the middle of the fence out the main dirt road. Other antlers—there are more than we know what to do with—stick from each post around the forest and river and field. The alfalfa tractor has also got antlers above its grille.

The sun has spirals of laughing youth twirling off its centre, with a proud Elkhead in the middle, or so you can imagine. The elk bugle louder and the children scream songs of play with the same increasing solar urgency. The sun is so strong, even here in the north. The porch gets nuked when there isn't enough venting between the mountains. Don't know how many times I've had to re-finish it.

o

Artists and inventors, fleeing demons or pursuing angels, have found a home in Enderbee county. Like my neighbour, Memily, who's an abstract expressionist painter, and grows lettuce in the summer, then blanches that along with other plants for the winter reserves. Talking to her, you will fall into colour, into all the colours of her garden and art, the landscape colours of her eyes. With her special someone, Dan-the-Man, she makes art instead of kids, what they call industrial art, which has recently taken a political turn. Such as the escape capsule, called "The Mattson Rocket," that looks like an old, compact rocket ship out back of their converted storehouse home. It's got steel runners and circular windows, stripes of old machine red over top of the riveted white. And an antenna sticking up from the tip. A nostalgic 2001 look. Memily and her partner built the capsule just in case there is no land left after all the development—a pod to save them, to take off into the skyahhh.

Sure, there are divisions, cliques, and tokenisms, and all that stuffy stuff of small populations in the rough, but, beyond that, the bonds are tight, and we help each other out. Like Memily will come round up the elk with me, and I will irrigate her garden when her and Dan-the-Man go south during asparagus season. Memily will trade her blanched crops for some of the jarred fish that the First Nations bring, I'll share alfalfa and hay. Based on barter, we've gotten along really good here.

I guess we all thought we really knew each other in



Enderbee. But one of us in the community is really good at keeping a secret, and secrets might be blowing our bonds apart.