

What Happened

Fawn Parker, City of Fredericton Poet Laureate 2024 – 2026
November 12, 2024

A woman at the library was met with applause,
having finished the whole of the World History Encyclopedia.

You would have to have been there to appreciate
the scale of this feat. The size, and number, of those books.

It is rumoured that she closed the final volume,
either the 19th, 21st, or, as one person claimed, the 40th,

and said, *What about everything else?*
A clerk doubled back to volume E, in search of *Everything*.

We talked about this at work because there was nothing else
going on that day. It wasn't a holiday nor did anyone

have much to say about their weekend. No one
reported on the rotting maple that collapsed in Odell park,

interrupting a group of runners training
for the marathon in May. None of us are runners.

Some climbed over the fallen tree and others turned
to run the other way. The woman from the library among them,

stopped and sat on the log, thinking of those few pages
between *Ziggurat* and *Zorvanism*.

She took an unusual route home, tiptoeing
through the blockaded construction site on Regent.

She slipped through a crack in the asphalt. Her name,
in the news, was everywhere. Later, we'll have to decide

whether to file her under N for *Notable Women* or D
for *Deaths and Disappearances*, if the editors decide

she, or her absence, are history.