What are you currently working on?

Three things. I have recently finished a “critical memoir” about the poet Phyllis Webb, *Almost Islands*, which will be published by Talonbooks in September 2018. The publisher’s blurb runs: “*Almost Islands* is a memoir of Collis’ friendship with and regular visits to legendary poet Phyllis Webb - now in her nineties and long enveloped in the silence which followed her last published book in 1990 - as well as an extended meditation on literary ambition and failure, poetry and politics, choice and chance, place, colonization, and climate change - the struggle that is writing, and the end of writing.” Second, a lecture, in collaboration with David Herd (University of Kent), on the discourse of universal human rights, post WWII, and the simultaneous Great Acceleration to which scientists point as the moment the Anthropocene became ... the Anthropocene, introducing another “universal.” We will give this talk as a keynote address at the Cartographic Imaginations conference in Paris this May. Finally, I’m writing a very long poem (it’s getting close to 80 pages and I’m not half-way there), using thirty years of my journals - a sort of life-poem or anti-autobiographical poem, because, hey, what the world really needs is another long poem, right?

What are you reading for fun?

Like many for whom reading is a job, I don’t get to do this nearly enough. But there’s always bedtime reading, and that’s often a novel, often one written by a friend who I’m trying to keep up with. Right now it’s Ali Smith’s *Autumn*, which is wonderful. It’s breathless and breakneck narration, so slippery and quick, and if you’ve ever heard Smith talk, it’s very much like having her voice in your head.

What work do you wish you could read again for the first time?

Anything by W. G. Sebald. I especially remember the first reading of *The Rings of Saturn* and trying to figure out why, with no plot whatsoever, I found it so very riveting. How does he do that? I’m still pondering, and often re-reading him.

What writer(s), living or dead, would you like to have dinner with?

Sebald. Better taking a walk with him than having dinner though.

What is the most famous book you haven’t read yet?

Hmm. Anything by Dickens. I think I had to read *Great Expectations* once (as an undergrad). But I don’t think I’ve read anything else by him. Plot might be the problem here too - I seem not to like plot so much.