



## ARTS & LITERATURE AND NATURE (ALAN)

### “Palmer” directed by Fisher Stevens (2021)

#### **Recommended by Ashley Pauls**

Eddie Palmer is released from prison and returns to his childhood home. While he is struggling to adjust to life outside of prison, he meets Sam, a child who is experiencing adversity at home, as well as gender dysphoria. With child-like innocence, Sam brings colour and meaning back to Palmer’s life. They parallel each other, as both are finding their place in the small town. Over time, they embrace each other’s differences and each receives a second chance at life. In the process, they discover that family can be chosen. This film explores adult and peer reactions to gender diversity, adverse childhood experiences, child protection, parental substance abuse, and life after incarceration in a manner that evokes empathy and hope.

**Dr. Ashley Pauls** is a child psychiatry fellow at the University of Calgary

### “Leave No Trace” directed by Debra Granik (2018)

#### **Recommended by John McLennan**

The movie “Leave No Trace” is based on the book “My Abandonment” by Peter Rock. It is apparently based on a true story. This movie depicts a short period of time in the complex lives of a father and teenage daughter. The father is attempting for the two of them to live off the grid, perhaps related to his past trauma from his time in the military. The film convincingly portrays the challenges of a youth living with the impacts of parental mental illness. The viewer experiences the tension she experiences trying to navigate

and balance between meeting her father’s needs and her own. The film captures moments of the uncomfortableness of their relationship, as well as the social interactions they have with others, in addition to moments of caring and support. The movie avoids simplistic portrayals of ideas or of easy solutions, which may encourage the viewer to reflect on their own beliefs.

**Dr. John D. McLennan** is a psychiatrist at the University of Calgary

### “A Line in the River: Khartoum, City of Memory” written by Jamal Mahjoub (2018)

#### **Recommended by Peter Braunberger**

“If there is a purpose to the city, then, it lies in the alchemy produced by the fusion of these two currents, the subduction of difference, this blending of contrasts” Jamal Mahjoub

Returning to rediscover a childhood and family within the present and historical reality of Khartoum, Jamal Mahjoub’s “A Line in the River” is a captivating memoir, but with the eye of a traveler, and with attention to the historical roots of the present. After a childhood in Sudan, and then a young adult life in Britain, Mahjoub, the author of 17 published novels and works, returns to the places and times from which much of his earlier writings have drawn. Khartoum, where the two Niles join, and where histories meet, also asks for an internalized settling of realities. In a smaller Covid impacted world, Mahjoub’s A Line in the River takes you to important places and times in a personal way.

**Dr. Peter Braunberger** is a child and adolescent psychiatrist in Thunder Bay