



Long Change

Don Gillmor

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Don Gillmor's brilliant new novel, *Long Change*, examines the world of oil through the life and loves of one man; both stories are epic.

Fleeing his violent, Pentecostal father, as well as a crime he committed in the parking lot of the first bar he ever entered, Ritt Devlin leaves Texas at fifteen, crossing the border into Alberta. Big for his age, he soon finds work on an oil rig on the outskirts of Medicine Hat. But that's not the life he wants, and he saves up to study geology. By the time he's in his early twenties he's the head of his own oil company.

Spanning almost seventy years, and following the geology and politics of oil from Texas to the Canadian oil patch, to Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Azerbaijan, various political capitals, and the Arctic, *Long Change* is divided into three parts, each of them framed by one of Ritt's marriages. The first, to his great love, Oda, shows the beginnings of his company; that marriage is cut short when Oda dies of cancer while carrying their first child. His second wife is Deirdre, an elegant lawyer who helps Ritt expand Mackenzie Oil, but who needs more than business from her marriage. Then there is Alexa, a late middle age fling, a bad idea on both sides, in some ways as violent and delusional as the oil business.

The vision that drives Ritt throughout his life is to drill in pristine Arctic waters, and he pulls it off. But then comes the inevitable disaster. Ritt, now in his eighties, is not the man he was in any sense of the word. As he staggers away from the scene of the disaster, through the Arctic night, we know the dream of oil and of his own company is also burning in the night...

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