

Elizabeth Hay

The first time I saw Elizabeth Hay was at the [Sunshine Coast Festival](#) of the Written Arts in Sechelt a few years back. This festival, which has just celebrated its thirtieth anniversary, is a great place to enjoy readings and get up close and personal with writers.

It was a sunny morning and Elizabeth was signing books and chatting to readers. I remember overhearing her mention a certain bakery in Toronto where she liked to buy fresh bread in the morning. It made her so real and accessible, especially as the woman whose book she was signing also knew and liked the bakery.

At the time, I was waiting to have the author sign *Garbo Laughs*, a title I found irresistible. I later read it while on vacation in Mexico and it made a strong impression. This book was nominated for the Governor-General's Award and recognized in the honours lists of the *Globe and Mail*, *Macleans* and *Quill and Quire*.

*A Student of Weather* (2000) was another of Hay's talked-about books. It was nominated for the Giller and won the Marion Engel Award.

*Late Nights on Air*, a novel about radio, is set in Yellowknife, in the Canadian North. Published by McClelland and Stewart, it won the Giller Prize in 2007, and was reviewed in glowing terms in [Walrus](#) and is featured in her author profile in [Quill and Quire](#). Podcasts of the story from CBC Between the Covers can be accessed [here](#).

Hay's latest novel, *Alone in the Classroom* (2011), takes place in 1929 in a small rural school. According to the [author's website](#), it shows the "urgency of discovering what we were never told about the past."

Elizabeth Hay has also written for magazines and worked in radio.