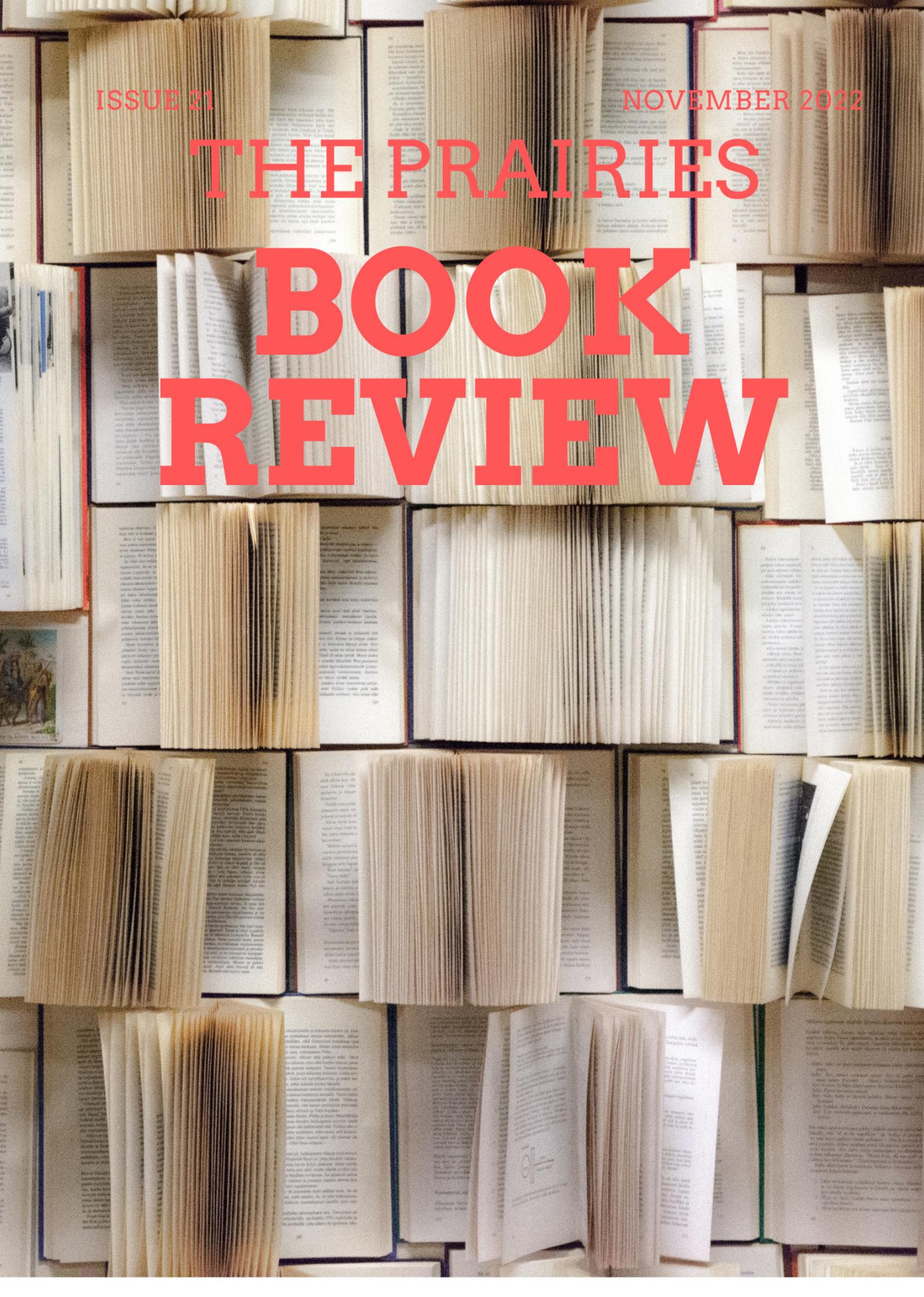


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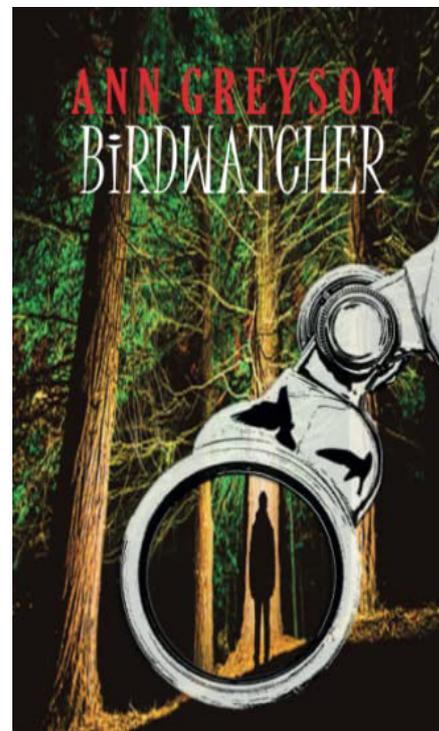
# THE PRAIRIES BOOK REVIEW



**Birdwatcher by Ann Greyson**

**An edgy, intricately plotted supernatural thriller...**

Greyson's arresting visuals conjure a vividly detailed world populated by multilayered, complex characters in her latest crime thriller. When twelve-year-old Abby vanishes in the wilderness of the majestic Pocono Mountains in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania, Sheriff Andy Kirkman of the Monroe County Sheriff's Office is assigned the case. As he digs deeper, he realizes a serial killer is on the loose, targeting young girls. But Abby is long-dead, and her spirit is still haunting the grounds of the cabin from where she went missing. Greyson is at ease mixing usual genre tropes to produce an absorbing crime story. The thorough, tight plotting allows for pitch-perfect pacing that keeps the reader invested. Sheriff Kirkman as the lead authority on the case is wholly engaging. Equally compelling are Billy, Missy, and Gail. But it's the young, troubled Abby who steals the show: Greyson gives her an aura of melancholy and darkness, and readers wouldn't help but root for the little girl to get some kind of peace. A page-turning crime story, packed with murder, mayhem, and supernatural intrigue.



**The Brooch: A Magic Within by Sandeep Kumar Mishra**

**A feel-good story to teach children empathy and compassion.**

Mishra delves into the "butterfly effect" of physics and applies it to the act of kindness in his latest picture book. A small child hoping to get his candy-of-the-week realizes an old woman needs it more and offers it to her. The woman gives the boy a magic talisman for his kindness, initiating a cycle of benevolence that brings a wholly unexpected outcome. The prose is choppy at times and the narrative a bit rough. But Mishra is especially good at execution (of central theme). He skillfully portrays how a small act of compassion in starting conditions can go a long way, leading to vastly unexpected outcomes. He wisely refrains from lecturing readers or turning a single protagonist into a savior. Instead, there are a variety of situations and a large set of characters, making it an excellent choice for a read-along story time. The vibrant, colorful illustrations complement the narrative. A lovely book to start discussions about cultivating empathy in children.

