

Jonathan Ball

*from* LETTERS TO THE CHURCHES OF THE PRAIRIES

*(Revelation 2: 1–7)*

To Ephesus,

Ephesus, you're a good man. I haven't forgotten about the time that we went ice fishing and you backed up my story about the huge catfish which maybe wasn't quite so big as I might have told people. Okay, Hell, it wasn't a catfish at all, just one of those damn pickerel with the blotches from whatever it is they dump into the Assiniboine these days. You can't eat those things and you're foolish to try, but what with all the rules they've come up with since I was a kid who bothers to keep anything they catch. Anyhow, you've done a lot for me over the years, the fish thing wasn't the only thing of course, and so I think I owe it to you to say that I think what you're up to these days is terrible. Everyone knows that it was you who got the Friesen widow preggers last spring, everyone but Molly that is, and dammit it's about time you came out and admitted you done wrong. The poor girl still loves you after seven years of hard marriage and just cuz you're itching it doesn't mean you've got to scratch it with ol' Sarah Friesen whose husband ain't been dead more than two years now. Maybe Jack wasn't the best husband to the poor thing, maybe I saw the bruises well as you did, but that don't mean you've got to be the one to make her lousy life up to her and besides since when was that the only way to cheer up a girl? We all know she's too timid to cause a fuss, 'specially after being married to Jack, so it's gonna have to be up to someone else to break the bad news to Molly. It'd be best coming from you of course, you know that, but if you don't do it soon I'm going to march right down there while you're at work and tell Molly myself. I would have done it already except I figured you deserved fair warning on account of the catfish and how you helped me run that bastard Nicolas outta town when he was bothering my daughter and looked primed to do more than catcall her in the street. Well, I've said my piece and I hope you'll do the right thing.

God bless.

A Friend