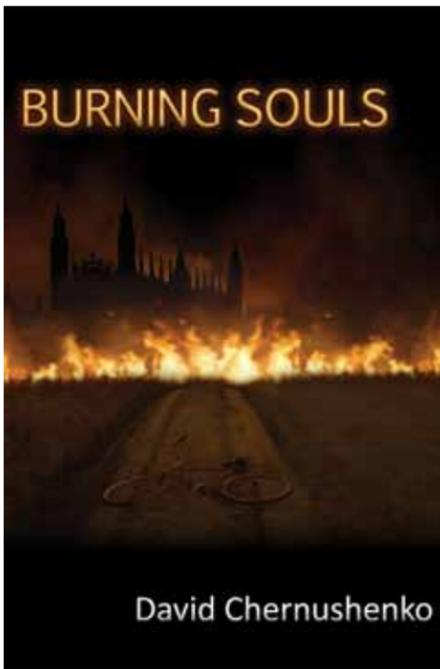


# BOOKS

## Burning Souls — It’s My Story, and Yours



or matters; a surge in desperate migration; and of course the breakdown of climate and ecological systems. How can we not go to dark places? Dramatic fiction was the tool I needed to use. I could have fun writing, even if the subject matter was often wrenching.

**What is the novel about?**

*Burning Souls* is about the price you pay for speaking truth to power, and the importance of doing it anyway. In a time of ecological breakdown and the suppression of truth, four university friends — Canadian journalist Simone Cohen, American climate scientist Dr. Sagan Cleveland (a.k.a. DJ Sagan), Malaysian entrepreneur Jenny Fung and Japanese lawyer-turned-governor of Fukushima, Jiro Ebitsu — discover what living in integrity means, and how big a price they are willing to pay for it.



David Chernushenko

PHOTO BY BALFOUR PHOTO

**An interview with David Chernushenko**

**“So David, what have you been up to since leaving City Council?”**

How many times have I heard that? Fortunately, the answer is short, simple and far more upbeat than some expect:

1. Enjoying the best ski season ever.
2. Writing a novel.

Of course you can’t just dangle a line like “writing a novel” without expanding, and the OSCAR has asked me to do just that. So here goes, in the form of a Q&A.

**Why a novel, and not a scandal-ridden tell-all on the workings of City Hall?**

When the time comes to step away, I think it is healthy to step away completely. And with such pressing global issues demanding my/our attention, I chose not only to address some of them head on, but to do it through fiction. *Burning Souls* is my first novel, and that was part of the attraction: tackling really tough and urgent subjects in the form of a thriller. You can really let loose! Disturbing changes are afoot in our world: the collapse of fish stocks and pollinating insects; the surge in high impact storms and fires; a resurgence of populism and retreat from collective welfare; the fuzzing of truth, and whether science exists

the risk! I should mention there is a wicked villain— doing the dirty work of predatory climate breakdown deniers and delayers. *Burning Souls* is about more than climate breakdown and friendship though. Key themes include: the critical role of investigative journalism; how we deal psychologically with the knowledge that our ecosystems are in free-fall, and what might we still do about it; harassment of truth-tellers; and the surge in global migration, in tandem with the rise of populism, authoritarianism and supremacist sentiments.

**How long is it?**

It’s a good, long read. Midway between the shortest and longest *Harry Potter*.

**You say it’s fiction, but is it actually a climate lecture dressed up as a story?**

No, that would be misleading the reader. There is plenty of science and you will learn something — oh my! — but this is truly a character-driven novel where the reader will learn, and perhaps evolve, along with the heroes and villain.

**When will it be out?**

The book launch is May 27 at 7pm at Southminster United. A very

local affair. It will then be sold in most local bookstores, and available online. There will be both print and e-book versions, and I have plans to do an audio version. I’ve even recorded the first chapter as a “teaser” and reward for people who donate to my Indiegogo campaign.

**What’s an Indiegogo campaign?**

It’s a way of crowd-funding the money needed to pay for the substantial costs of professional editors, book design and printing. Also for my national “Electric Burning Souls Road Trip,” a cross-Canada book tour by electric car. I am looking for neighbourhood support to take me to my \$12,000 goal. There are “perks” for supporters!

**Check out davidc.ca.**

*David Chernushenko is a local writer, filmmaker, speaker and former city councillor (2010-18).*

***Burning Souls***  
book launch  
May 27 at 7pm  
Southminster United

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