

## PRESS RELEASE

### **BIG MONEY FOR CANADA'S BEST WRITERS: WRITERS' TRUST AWARDS \$133,000 IN LITERARY PRIZE MONEY**

**Toronto - March 3, 2004** - The Writers' Trust of Canada announced tonight the winners of eight national literary prizes at the third annual Great Literary Awards, held at the Arts and Letters Club of Toronto. The Writers' Trust awards night is one of the richest literary prize-giving events in the country, awarding Canadian writers a grand total of \$133,000.

"Tonight's winners have crafted outstanding novels and short stories and thought-provoking non-fiction and biographies," said Janet Wright, Chair of the Writers' Trust of Canada. "Their recognition is well deserved and the Writers' Trust is proud to reward excellence in Canadian writing."

This year's winners come from across the country and include emerging talents, like British Columbia's Kevin Patterson and Newfoundland-born Jessica Grant, along with some of Canada's most distinguished writers, such as Saskatchewan's Guy Vanderhaeghe and British Columbia's Audrey Thomas.

"Without the charitable support we receive from private citizens, corporations, and foundations, these awards would not be possible," said Lascelle Wingate, executive director of the Writers' Trust of Canada. "On behalf of the entire organization, I'd like to thank our numerous sponsors, and this evening's event sponsor, Sun Life Financial, for their support."

These are the prizes presented at the Great Literary Awards, including comments from the juries.

#### **THE ROGERS WRITERS' TRUST FICTION PRIZE (\$15,000)**

Sponsored by Rogers Communications Inc.

Awarded to a writer of a novel or short story collection.

#### **WINNER:**

**Kevin Patterson** (Salt Spring Island, British Columbia) for ***Country of Cold***, published by Vintage Canada

#### **JURY CITATION:**

"Patterson writes prose with intimate, unerring dialogue, a sharp eye for the telling image, and a sixth sense for choosing exactly the right moment to convey his emotional punch. *Country of Cold* is a gripping, exquisitely crafted collection of linked stories."

- **Kevin Chong, Lisa Moore, and Diane Schoemperlen**

Patterson grew up in Manitoba and put himself through medical school by enlisting in the Canadian army. When his service was up, he worked as a doctor in the Arctic and on the coast of British Columbia while studying for his MFA.



**FINALISTS** (each receives \$2,000):

**Jacqueline Baker** (Edmonton) for *A Hard Witching and Other Stories*, published by HarperFlamingo Canada/  
A Phyllis Bruce Book

**Gil Courtemanche** (Montreal) for *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali*, translated by Patricia Claxton and published  
by Alfred A. Knopf Canada

**Barbara Gowdy** (Toronto) for *The Romantic*, published by HarperFlamingo Canada

**Judith McCormack** (Toronto) for *The Rule of Last Clear Chance*, published by the Porcupine's Quill

## THE PEARSON WRITERS' TRUST NON-FICTION PRIZE (\$15,000)

Sponsored by Pearson Canada

Awarded to a writer of a non-fiction book.

### WINNER:

**Brian Fawcett** (Toronto) for *Virtual Clearcut: Or, the Way Things Are in My Hometown*, published by  
Thomas Allen Publishers

### JURY CITATION:

"*Virtual Clearcut* is an unapologetically subjective and impassioned reckoning of the forces that have sustained and paralyzed the individual and collective will of a small community (Prince George, British Columbia). Vigorous and unflinching, Fawcett poses awkward questions of himself, his friends, environmentalists, government, and the timber industry."

- Katherine Ashenburg, Stephen Brunt, and Ken Wiwa

Fawcett was born and raised in Prince George and is the author of more than a dozen books, including the recently published *Local Matters: A Defence of Dooney's Café and Other Non-Globalized Places, People, and Ideas*. He currently edits the Internet news service dooneyscafe.com.

**FINALISTS** (each receives \$2,000):

**Mark Abley** (Montreal) for *Spoken Here: Travels Among Threatened Languages*, published by Random House  
Canada

**J. Edward Chamberlin** (Toronto) for *If This Is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories?* Finding Common Ground,  
published by Alfred A. Knopf Canada

**Taras Grescoe** (Montreal) for *The End of Elsewhere: Travels Among the Tourists*, published by Macfarlane  
Walter & Ross/McClelland & Stewart

**Marq de Villiers** and **Sheila Hirtle** (Lunenburg, Nova Scotia) for *Sahara: A Natural History*, published by  
McClelland & Stewart



## THE DRAINIE-TAYLOR BIOGRAPHY PRIZE (\$10,000)

Sponsored by Claire Drainie Taylor and Nathan A. (Nat) Taylor.

Awarded to a writer of a biography, autobiography, or memoir.

### WINNER:

**Geoffrey Stevens** (Cambridge, Ontario) for *The Player: The Life & Times of Dalton Camp*, published by Key Porter Books

### JURY CITATION:

"Geoffrey Stevens has deftly managed to revive the almost lost art of the compelling Canadian political biography. Stevens has latched onto a powerful, complex, and often enigmatic personality who once loomed large in the life of many Canadians and transformed this life into a tale that has both historical fascination and contemporary resonance."

- Charles Foran, John Fraser, and Phyllis Grosskurth

Stevens is a political journalist. For fifteen years he worked in the Parliamentary Press Gallery in Ottawa, and for the past eight he was *The Globe and Mail's* associate editor and national political columnist. He currently teaches at the University of Waterloo.

### FINALISTS:

**Paul Adams** (Tel Aviv, Israel) for *Summer of the Heart: Saving Alexandre*, published by Macfarlane Walter & Ross/McClelland & Stewart

**Kevin Bazzana** (Brentwood Bay, British Columbia) for *Wondrous Strange: The Life and Art of Glenn Gould*, published by McClelland & Stewart

**Joel Yanofsky** (Montreal) for *Mordecai & Me: An Appreciation of a Kind*, published by Red Deer Press

## THE WRITERS' TRUST OF CANADA/McCLELLAND & STEWART JOURNEY PRIZE (\$10,000)

Made possible by James A. Michener's donation of his Canadian royalty earnings from his 1988 novel, *Journey*.

Awarded to a new, developing writer for a short story or excerpt from a novel-in-progress published in a Canadian literary journal.

### WINNER:

Jessica Grant (Calgary) for "My Husband's Jump," published in *The Malahat Review*

"When the narrator's husband takes his final Olympic ski jump, he never lands. This story suggests that the physical and spiritual worlds may be brought into occasional and very surprising contact. The husband goes up but never comes down, leaving the wife to become a believer and the believers to cry foul."

- Michelle Berry, Timothy Taylor, and Michael Winter

Grant, originally from St. John's, is currently working on a collection of short stories, to be published by the Porcupine's Quill in the fall of 2004. "My Husband's Jump" is her first published story. *The Malahat Review* receives \$2,000 for publishing the winning story.



#### FINALISTS:

**Dawn Rae Downton** (South Shore, Nova Scotia) for "Hansel and Gretel," published in *Grain*

**Charlotte Gill** (Vancouver) for "Hush," published in *Grain*

### THE WRITERS' TRUST OF CANADA'S TIMOTHY FINDLEY AWARD (\$15,000)

Sponsored by the Writers' Trust of Canada.

Awarded to a male writer in mid-career for a body of work.

#### WINNER:

**Guy Vanderhaeghe** (Saskatoon)

#### JURY CITATION:

"Ever since the publication of his first collection of stories, with their remarkable blend of gentle comedy and compassion, Guy Vanderhaeghe has refused to rely on one proven mode. Whether set in the old West, or on the contemporary prairie, or in the universal city, Vanderhaeghe's fiction rings humanly true, and in it we see each other and ourselves."

- **Sandra Birdsell, George Galt, and Bill Gaston**

Vanderhaeghe's first collection of short stories, *Man Descending*, was discovered in the slush pile at Macmillan Canada. It later went on to win the Governor General's Award for Fiction and the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize in Great Britain. His latest book, *The Last Crossing*, was the winner of this year's Canada Reads competition. He was recently named an Officer of the Order of Canada.

### THE MARIAN ENGEL AWARD (\$15,000)

Sponsored by Hon. Hilary M. Weston.

Awarded to a female writer in mid-career for a body of work.

#### WINNER:

Elisabeth Harvor (Ottawa)

#### JURY CITATION:

"A beautiful writer who doesn't shy from ugly truths, Elisabeth Harvor explores the near limits of desperation and the far fields of childhood in stories that are fresh, uncomfortable, and risky. In the process she has become a master at charting the ills of body and soul and the movement from innocence to experience."

- Terry Griggs, Elizabeth Hay, and Alistair MacLeod

Harvor is a past winner of the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award for poetry and a finalist for the Governor General's Award for Fiction. Her second novel, *All Times Have Been Modern*, will be published this year.



## THE VICKY METCALF AWARD FOR CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (\$15,000)

Sponsored by the George Cedric Metcalf Foundation.

Awarded to a writer of children's literature for a body of work.

### WINNER:

**Roslyn Schwartz** (Montreal)

### JURY CITATION:

"Roslyn Schwartz is a virtuoso of the picture book form. In all her books but most especially in the Mole Sisters stories she demonstrates how minimal text, tiny pictures, and hilariously unambitious images can convey worlds of meaning and character. Playful, intelligent, and peopled with unforgettable characters, Schwartz's titles are a significant, inimitable contribution to Canadian children's literature."

- **Deirdre Baker, Sarah Ellis, and Tim Wynne-Jones**

Schwartz is the author and illustrator of the Mole Sisters series of children's picture books for preschoolers. The series follows two curious and creative sisters and their positive approach to life.

## THE WRITERS' TRUST OF CANADA'S MATT COHEN AWARD: IN CELEBRATION OF A WRITING LIFE (\$20,000)

Awarded to a writer whose life has been dedicated to writing as a primary pursuit, for a body of work.

### WINNER:

**Audrey Thomas** (Galiano Island, British Columbia)

Thomas immigrated to Canada in 1959. She has written ten novels, six short story collections, and over twenty radio dramas. Her most celebrated novel is *Intertidal Life*, an obsessive introspection of a failed marriage. Thomas received the Marian Engel Award in 1987 and the W.O. Mitchell Literary Prize in 2001.

### COMMITTEE CITATION:

"Thomas writes about pain and loss, but she also writes about joy and contentment - not the joy of finding, but the pleasure of seeking."

- **Matt Cohen Award Committee**



The 2004 Great Literary Awards event is made possible with generous support from the following sponsors:

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The Writers' Trust of Canada is a unique national charitable organization providing a level of support to writers unmatched by any other non-governmental organization or foundation. Through its various programs and awards, it celebrates the talents and achievements of our country's novelists, poets, biographers, and non-fiction writers. The Writers' Trust is committed to exploring and introducing to future generations the traditions that will enrich our common literary heritage and strengthen Canada's cultural foundations. For more information, please visit [www.writerstrust.com](http://www.writerstrust.com).

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