

Comic Tales and the Quest for Sustainable Living Win Big at the Writers' Trust Awards: Miriam Toews and Taras Grescoe Awarded Top Prizes of \$25,000

Toronto – November 17, 2008 – The works of great Canadian authors were honoured this evening at the Isabel Bader Theatre at the eighth annual Writers' Trust Awards. Winnipeg writer Miriam Toews received the \$25,000 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize for *The Flying Troutmans*, a comic novel about a young woman and her niece and nephew on a motel-hopping road trip in search of the children's father. Montreal writer Taras Grescoe won the \$25,000 Writers' Trust Non-Fiction Prize for *Bottomfeeder: How to Eat Ethically in a World of Vanishing Seafood*, an account of the global crisis of fisheries and its implications, as well as a practical guide to sustainable consumption.

Four authors received awards for their excellence in literature: Sylvia Fraser, Michael Kusugak, Saleema Nawaz, and Michael Winter. Additionally, Rogers received an award for its long-standing support of the Writers' Trust.

Seven prizes were awarded with a combined value of \$155,000, making the event one of the richest awards nights in Canada. The prize amounts of several awards have increased by up to \$10,000 from last year, reaffirming the Writers' Trust's commitment to supporting Canadian writers.

Below are the prizes presented at the Writers' Trust Awards, with comments from the judges:

THE ROGERS WRITERS' TRUST FICTION PRIZE (\$25,000)

Sponsored by Rogers Communications Inc.

•Winner: **Miriam Toews** (Winnipeg) for *The Flying Troutmans*, published by Knopf Canada
"Toews's book is a love song to young people trying to navigate the volcanic world of adult emotions."

Finalists (each receives \$3,500):

- Rivka Galchen** (New York City) for *Atmospheric Disturbances*, published by HarperCollins Canada
- Rawi Hage** (Montreal) for *Cockroach*, published by House of Anansi Press
- Lee Henderson** (Vancouver) for *The Man Game*, published by Viking Canada
- Patrick Lane** (North Saanich, British Columbia) for *Red Dog, Red Dog*, published by McClelland & Stewart

Jury: Lawrence Hill (Burlington, Ontario), Annabel Lyon (Vancouver), and Heather O'Neill (Montreal)

THE WRITERS' TRUST NON-FICTION PRIZE (\$25,000)

•Winner: **Taras Grescoe** (Montreal) for *Bottomfeeder: How to Eat Ethically in a World of Vanishing Seafood*, published by HarperCollins Canada

"*Bottomfeeder* navigates the troubling waters that lie between our collective desire for cheap seafood and the damage that we have done to the oceans and their inhabitants in order to secure it."

Finalists (each receives \$3,500):

- Carl Honoré** (London, United Kingdom) for *Under Pressure: Rescuing Childhood from the Culture of Hyper-Parenting*, published by Knopf Canada
- Mark Kingwell** (Toronto) for *Concrete Reveries: Consciousness and the City*, published by Viking Canada
- Margaret Visser** (Toronto/Paris/south of France) for *The Gift of Thanks: The Roots, Persistence and Paradoxical Meanings of a Social Ritual*, published by HarperCollins Canada
- Russell Wangersky** (St. John's) for *Burning Down the House: Fighting Fire and Losing Myself*, published by Thomas Allen Publishers

Jury: Derek Lundy (Salt Spring Island, British Columbia), Jan Wong (Toronto), and Darren Wershler-Henry (Toronto)

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*, and awarded to a new and developing writer for the best short story or excerpt from a novel-in-progress that had its first publication in a Canadian literary journal in the previous year.

•Winner: **Saleema Nawaz** (Montreal) for "My Three Girls," published in *Prairie Fire*
"This tightly written piece accomplishes the impressive feat of condensing a novel's worth of sorrows and joys into a few pages."

For publishing the winning entry, *Prairie Fire* receives \$2,000.

Finalists:

- Dana Mills** (Toronto) for "Steaming for Godthab," published in *Geist*
- Clea Young** (Vancouver) for "Chaperone," published in *Grain Magazine*

Jury: Lynn Coody (Toronto), Heather O'Neill (Montreal), and Neil Smith (Montreal))

THE WRITERS' TRUST NOTABLE AUTHOR AWARD (\$25,000)

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

•Winner: **Michael Winter** (Toronto)
"Compulsively readable, crammed with uncommon wit and insight, Michael Winter's fiction is among the best this country has to offer."
Jury: Caroline Adderson (Vancouver), Michael Crummey (St. John's), and Diane Schoemperlen (Kingston, Ontario)

THE VICKY METCALF AWARD FOR CHILDREN'S LITERATURE (\$20,000)

Sponsored by the Metcalf Foundation.

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

•Winner: **Michael Kusugak** (Rankin Inlet, Nunavut)
"Kusugak writes unforgettably of the lived experience of the North, offering Canadian child and adult readers a living vision of a rich way of life."
Jury: Jean Little (Guelph, Ontario), Susan Perren (Toronto), and Judith Saltman (Vancouver)

THE MATT COHEN AWARD: IN CELEBRATION OF A WRITING LIFE (\$20,000)

Supported by Beatrice Wright and an anonymous donor.

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

•Winner: **Sylvia Fraser** (Toronto)
"[Fraser's] work is an eloquent tribute to the Writing Life."

THE WRITERS' TRUST AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED CONTRIBUTION

Awarded to an individual or organization for long-standing involvement with the Writers' Trust.

•Winner: **Rogers**
"In the last dozen years the Writers' Trust has received from Rogers in excess of three quarters of a million dollars. In presenting this award we would like to publicly acknowledge Rogers for their amazing level of support"

The 2008 Writers' Trust Awards event is made possible through generous support from corporate, foundation, and individual sponsors. The Writers' Trust would like to thank *The Globe and Mail* for continuing to be the event's national print media sponsor. Other sponsors include Black Prince Winery, Media Profile, Push Design, Steam Whistle Brewing, and the Sutton Place Hotel. The Writers' Trust Awards receive no financial support from any government programs.

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For writers' biographies, complete jury citations, information about the Writers' Trust, and a chance to win a set of this year's nominated titles, please visit writerstrust.com.

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