

## Pat Lowther Memorial Award Shortlist 2014

The Pat Lowther Memorial Award is given for a book of poetry by a Canadian woman published in the preceding year, and is in memory of the late Pat Lowther, whose career was cut short by her untimely death in 1975.

The award carries a \$1,000 prize and is sponsored by the League of Canadian Poets.

This year's shortlisted poets and books are:

***The Hottest Summer in Recorded History*** by Elizabeth Bachinsky (Nightwood Editions)

***Alongside*** by Anne Compton (Fitzhenry & Whiteside)

***Leaving Howe Island*** by Sadiqa de Meijer (Oolichan Books)

***Whirr and Click*** by Micheline Maylor (Frontenac House Poetry)

***Meeting the Tormentors in Safeway*** by Alexandra Oliver (Biblioasis)

***Status Update*** by Sarah Yi-Mei Tsiang (Oolichan Books)

**2014 Jury:** Elizabeth Greene, Cornelia Hoogland, Betsy Struthers

Congratulations to all of the authors for their fine work, and many thanks to the jurors for their dedication on this year's awards.

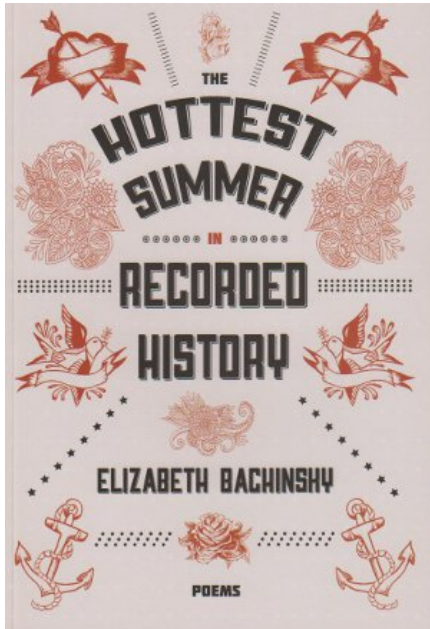
The winner of this award will be announced at the LCP Annual Poetry Festival and Conference in Toronto, ON, on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

For more information visit: [www.poets.ca](http://www.poets.ca)

## ***The Hottest Summer in Recorded History***

by Elizabeth Bachinsky

(Nightwood Editions)



### **About the author:**



**Elizabeth Bachinsky**

Elizabeth Bachinsky is the author of five collections of poetry: *Curio* (2005), *Home of Sudden Service* (2006), *God of Missed Connections* (2009), *I Don't Feel So Good* (2012) and *The Hottest Summer in Recorded History* (2013). Her work has been nominated for awards including the Pat Lowther Memorial Award and the Governor General's Award for Poetry. She was born in Regina, raised in Prince George and Maple Ridge, B.C., and now lives in Vancouver where she is an instructor of creative writing and the Editor of *Event Magazine*.

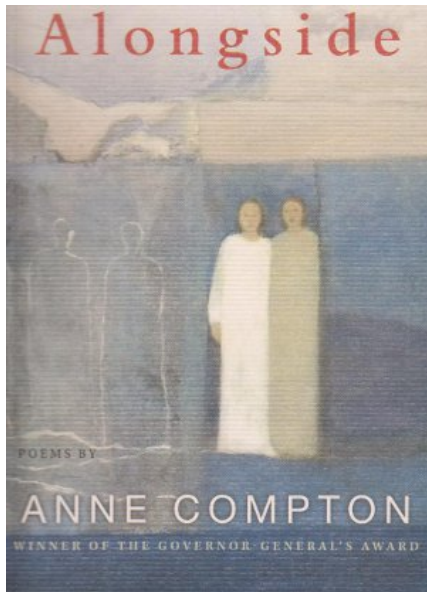
### **Judges' Comments:**

Elizabeth Bachinsky combines colloquial language with traditional forms, including breezy villanelles, a sestina, a pantoum, to create playful but also serious poetry which brings us inside the living tradition. This is up-to-the-minute poetry, complete with instant messaging, alternating between comedy and lyric, between toughness and grace. *The Hottest Summer in Recorded History* holds a mirror to the contemporary world, shapes it with unexpected rhyme, and is almost always ready to break into laughter.

## ***Alongside***

by Anne Compton

(Fitzhenry & Whiteside)



### **About the author:**



**Anne Compton**

Anne Compton is the two-time winner of the Atlantic Poetry Prize and winner of the Governor General's Literary Award for Poetry for her second collection *Processional*. In 2008, she was awarded the Alden Nowlan Award for Excellence in English Language Literary Arts. A former teacher and writer-in-residence at the University of New Brunswick at Saint John, she developed and directed acclaimed Lorenzo Reading Series.

### **Judges' Comments:**

A beautifully shaped and written extended elegy, traditional in its affection and loss and in the consolations of the natural world of the New Brunswick landscape—gardens, seasons, weather—but varied in the particularity of the poet friend and a relationship based on books, flowers and the work of planting and transplanting. This is poetry that lifts off the ground and strains to see into the afterlife, the nature of time, our relationship to the past and memory, the “different level” that imagination can bring us to—and does in *Alongside*.

## ***Leaving Howe Island***

by Sadiqa de Meijer

(Oolichan Books)



### **About the author:**



**Sadiqa de Meijer**

Sadiqa de Meijer was born in Amsterdam, and moved to Canada as a child. Her poetry, short stories and essays have appeared in many journals, including *The Malahat Review*, *Geist*, *The Fiddlehead*, *Riddle Fence* and *Poetry Magazine*. Her poems were anthologized in *The Best of Canadian Poetry in English 2008* (Tightrope Books) and in the international anthology *Villanelles* (Everyman's Library). In 2012, her series 'Great Aunt Unmarried' won the CBC Poetry Prize. She lives in Kingston with her family.

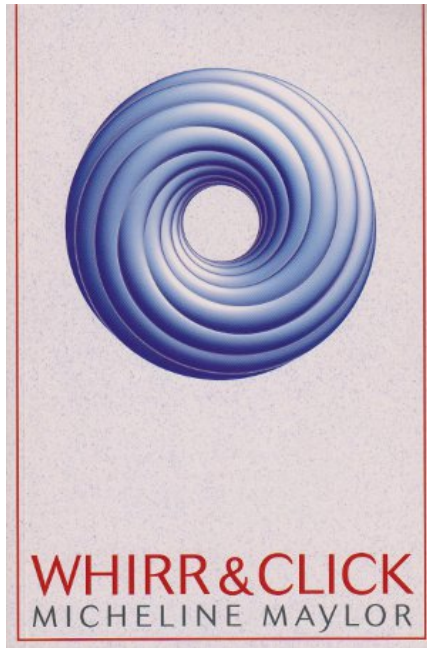
### **Judges' Comments:**

Sadiqa de Meijer's poems combine a significant intelligence with compelling social commentary. Most profound is her ability to shape her experience beyond prosaic or self-referential retelling. Her trickster narratives swerve to include historical, emotional and especially social depth. Juxtapositions within the poems further de Meijer's ideas, and her images land on their meanings with great clarity, as in a poem titled, "The Widows": "In the evenings, to the clicks of bedroom lamps, the widows/grow enormous on the muted florals of their walls." This is de Meijer's first book.

## ***Whirr and Click***

by Micheline Maylor

(Frontenac House Poetry)



### **About the author:**



**Micheline Maylor**

Micheline Maylor is a certified poetry fanatic. She received a BA with honours in English at the University of Calgary, a Masters with distinction in creative writing at Lancaster in England, a Ph.D at the University of Newcastle in English Language, and recently graduated from the May Studio at the Banff Centre. Her fiction and poetry have been published in over 75 journals in five countries. Her first book, *Full Depth: The Raymond Knister Poems* was published in 2007 by Wolsak & Wynn; her chapbook, *Starfish*, published by Rubicon Press, sold out in 2011. She currently teaches creative writing, poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and composition at Mount Royal University.

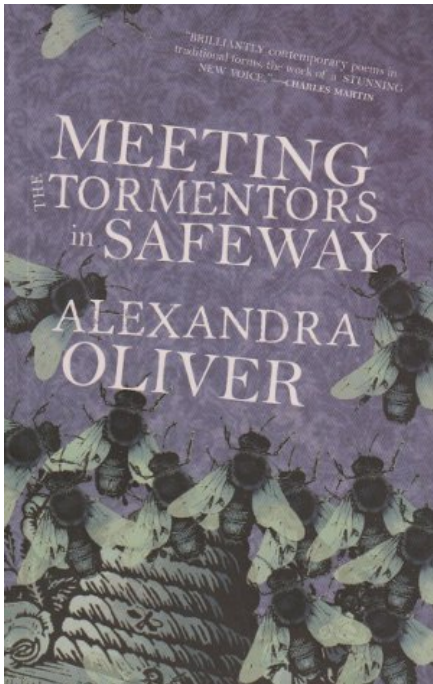
### **Judges' Comments:**

With the pinpoint clarity of a close-up and the inclusiveness of a wide-angle shot, the poems in Micheline Maylor's second collection capture those definitive moments of growing up and older: first love, lost love; making friends, losing them to time and death. Images grounded in the prairie and low mountain landscape are the backdrop to these snapshots that reveal an intimate engagement with language celebrating and mourning the realities of contemporary life.

## ***Meeting the Tormentors in Safeway***

by Alexandra Oliver

(Biblioasis)



### **About the author:**



**Alexandra Oliver**

Alexandra Oliver was born in Vancouver, BC. Her work has received nominations for the Pushcart Prize and a CBC Literary Award in Poetry. The author of one previous book, *Where the English Housewife Shines* (Tin Press London, UK 2007), Oliver co-edits *The Rotary Dial*, a journal of formalist poetry based in Toronto. She teaches in the Stonecoast M.F.A. Program at the University of Southern Maine.

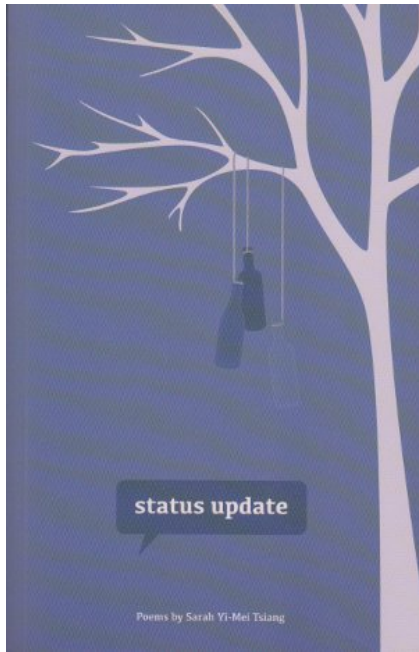
### **Judges' Comments:**

Alexandra Oliver's *Meeting the Tormentors in Safeway* is fresh and original. Stylistically formal, Oliver creates sharply realized scenes set within aural experiences honed by years as a performance poet. In "Over a Faberge Owl," line and metre are "live branches" of iambic rhythm, rhyme and theatrics. But the wild untamed energies that underscore civilization also underscore these branches studded with "claws calmly gripping" them. Similarly dark underlining of civilized scenes—delivered with the lightest touch—is what is most outstanding in this exceptional book.

## ***Status Update***

by Sarah Yi-Mei Tsiang

(Oolichan Books)



### **About the author:**



**Sarah Yi-Mei Tsiang**

Sarah Yi-Mei Tsiang's debut poetry collection, *Sweet Devilry* (2011), won the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award for best first book of poetry in Canada. She is also a children's author, professor, essayist, and as the editor of *Desperately Seeking Susans* (2012), now the world's foremost expert on living Canadian poets named Susan.

### **Judges' Comments:**

In her second book, Sarah Yi-Mei Tsiang uses real status updates from Facebook as epigraphs to poems that range from the formality of the glosa and haiku to breathless open verse: funny, tender, surprising, and wild. These are poems of rich diversity, touching on all aspects of life from the intimate to the perverse. Some are intensely personal, some are philosophical, all reveal a mind alive with the curious and profound interaction between the virtual and real worlds.