

## 2019 Raymond Souster Award Shortlist

### ***Anatomic* by Adam Dickinson (Coach House Books)**

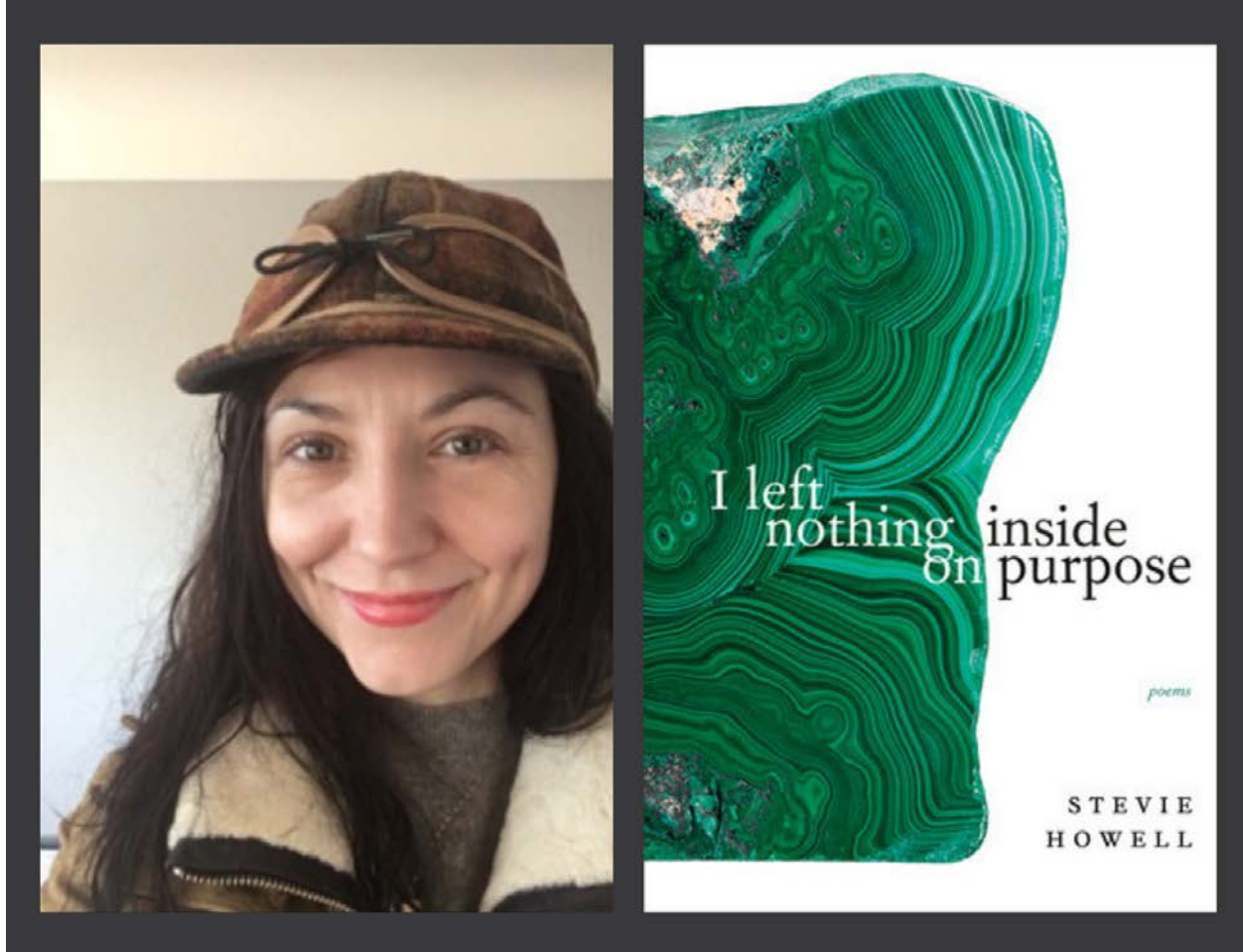
**Adam Dickinson's** work has been nominated for the Governor General's Award for Poetry, the Trillium Book Award for Poetry, and the ReLit Award. He was also a finalist for the CBC Poetry Prize and the K.M. Hunter Artist Award in Literature. He teaches poetics and creative writing at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada.



**From the Jurors:** Adam Dickinson had almost every possible personal effluvia he could express laboratory tested and analyzed. The results came back; they are *Anatomic*. His analyses begin by exploring tensions between scientific method and creative revelation, but segue into a chemically-mediated memoir that deconstructs the corporeal/corporate binary, showing us that dust is “the street talk of the Endocrine and Alderaan systems.” *Anatomic* presents a tour-de-force approach to the cultured body; it pursues with thoroughness and rigour a novel approach to poetry. This book asks not just what we do to our environments, but what those environments do to us.

***I left nothing inside on purpose* by Stevie Howell (McClelland & Stewart)**

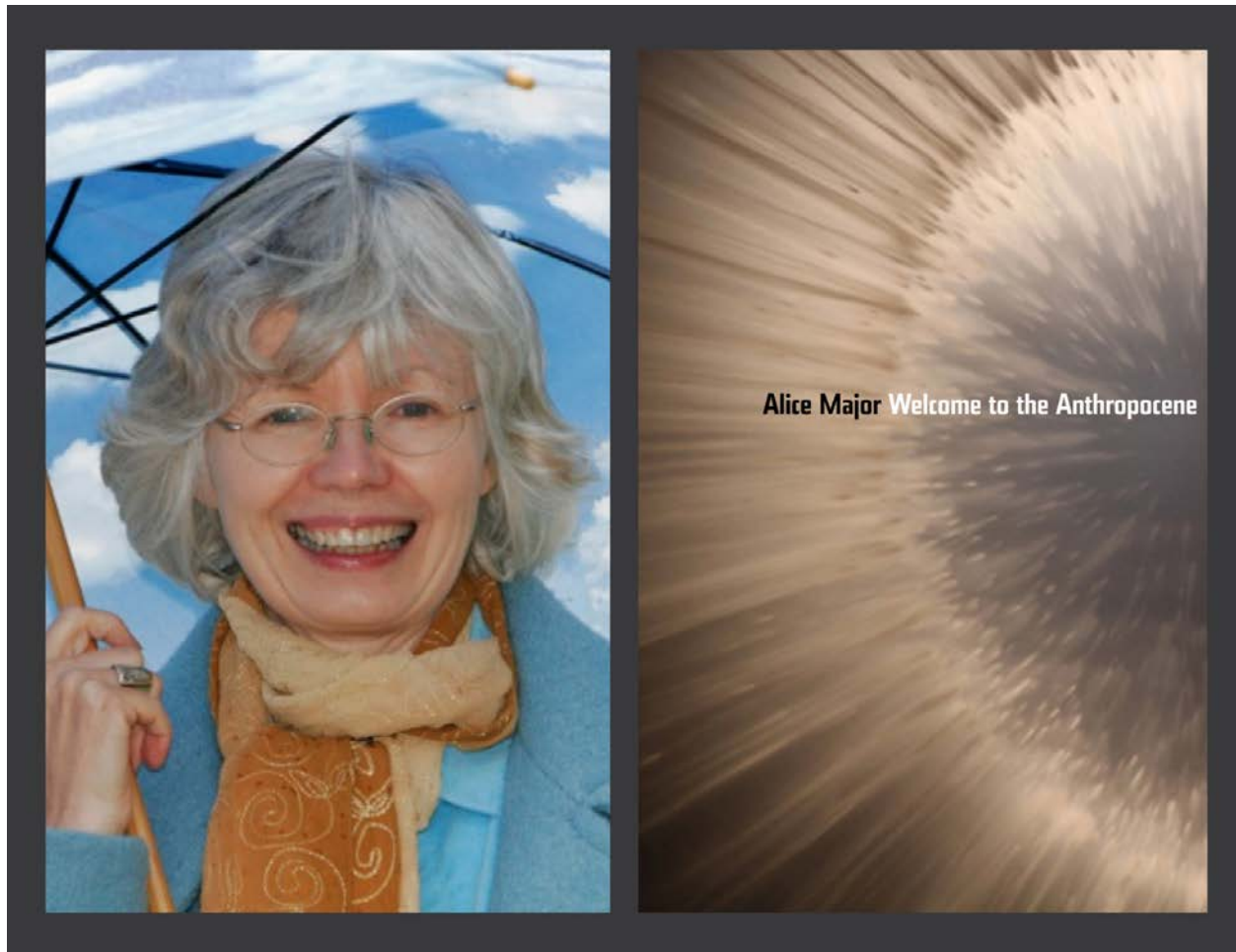
**Stevie Howell** is a psychometrist & writer who lives in Victoria, BC. Stevie's second collection of poetry, *I left nothing inside on purpose*, was released last spring by Penguin Random House Canada. Stevie is currently writing a thriller, & forever working on her afterlife.



***From the Jurors:*** Stevie Howell's poems create a dazzling sense of contemporary experience, with all its wounds, as well as the bruising quality of the past: an AI bot named Tay learns to be racist and sexist from "Talking w/ humans;" Kintsugi pottery and fragments from Kierkegaard, D.H. Lawrence, and the vocabulary of self-help rattle through the deceptive transparency of Howell's lines. The voice here insists on ironic distance and uncomfortable intimacy, poetic history and the banality of the present, "crowdfunded innocence" and "how pain never knows when to stop." This collection is sophisticated, funny, and sad, often within the same line.

**Welcome to the Anthropocene by Alice Major (University of Alberta Press)**

*Standard Candles* is **Alice Major's** tenth poetry collection. She has been using science – from geology to embryology – as one of her favourite source of images, ideas and understanding throughout a distinguished poetic career. Her books also include the essay collection, *Intersecting Sets: A Poet Looks at Science*. Her work has been recognized by prizes such as the Pat Lowther Memorial Award and a National Magazine Award gold medal. She has published and presented her work across Canada, as well as in the U.K., Australia and the U.S. Alice served as Edmonton's first poet laureate, and during that term she founded the Edmonton Poetry Festival. She has been a committed volunteer on behalf of writers, as president of the League of Canadian Poets and the Writers Guild of Alberta. In 2014 she was awarded the Guild's Golden Pen, recognizing an outstanding Alberta writer. Her website is [www.alicemajor.com](http://www.alicemajor.com)



**From the Jurors:** *Welcome to the Anthropocene* is expansive, coherent and provocative: “We are time’s derivative. / And for a little while, we are each a lens / in its compound eye.” The language and lineation involves readers willy nilly in Major’s love affair with eighteenth-century forms and philosophies. Throughout, Major interrogates human ascendancy. The poems vindicate the perception of us as the fickle species, extreme in both brilliance and folly. In *Welcome to the Anthropocene*, Major’s compassion more exposes than mitigates our hubris, but the writing shines, an example of the best of what “human” can mean.



***Tar Swan* by David Martin (NeWest Press)**

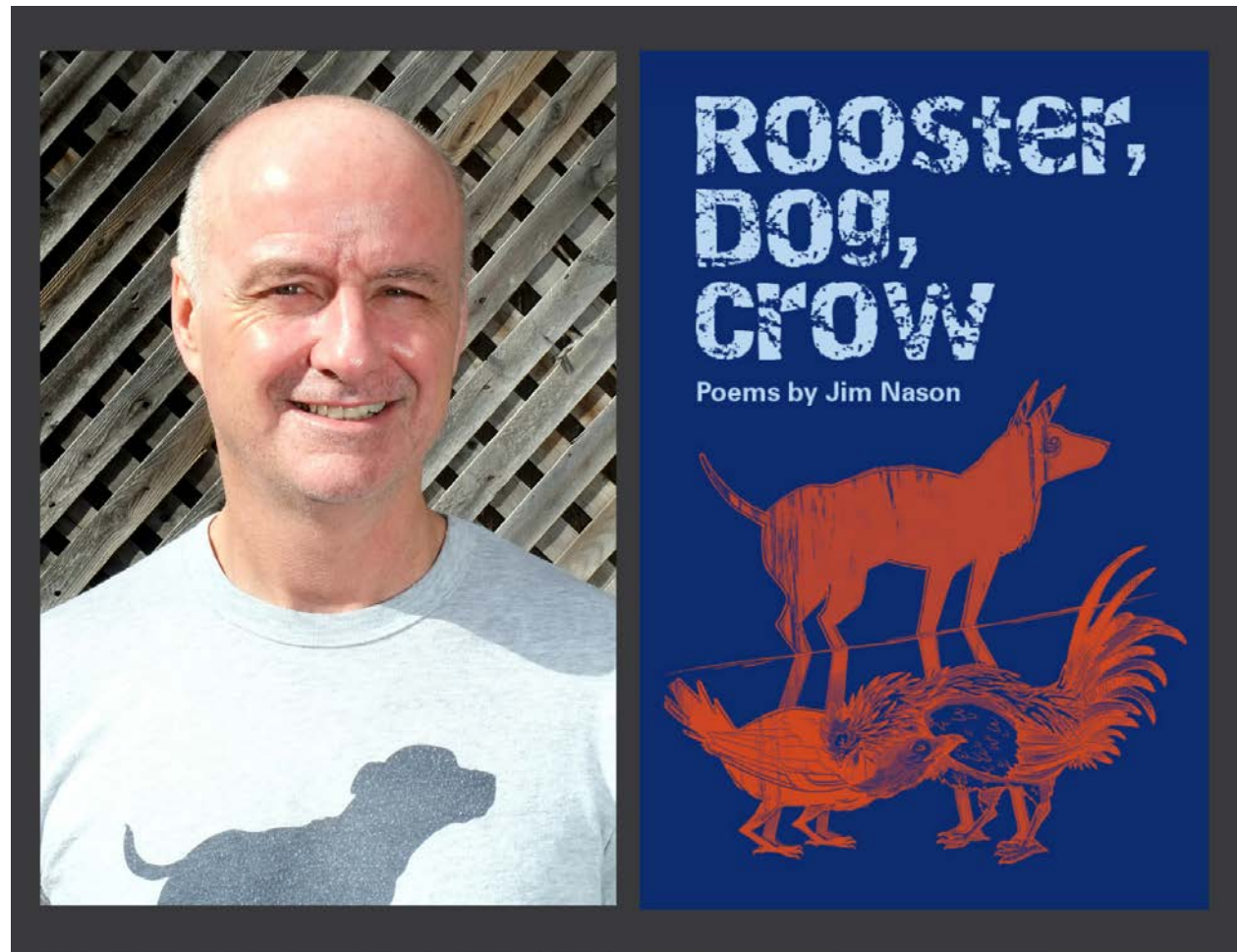
**David Martin** works as a literacy instructor in Calgary. His poetry has been awarded the CBC Poetry Prize and has appeared in journals such as *The Malahat Review*, *The Fiddlehead*, *Grain*, *filling Station*, *CV2*, and *Alberta Views*. *Tar Swan* (NeWest Press) is his first collection of poems.



***From the Jurors:*** In *Tar Swan*, David Martin has composed a quartet of exuberant and unpredictable voices on an urgent contemporary theme for the age of climate change. The eponymous swan is a “single cygnet” who sings and leaves traces that now “drive your cars” as well as the myths that make the Alberta Tar Sands possible. Martin explores those myths in gritty, sensual, and historically vivid language. This ambitious debut immerses us in the tar of archaeology and the bite of our own environmental dilemma, all with “a master’s sprezzatura form.”

**Rooster, Dog, Crow by Jim Nason (Frontenac House)**

**Jim Nason** is the author of six volumes of poetry, a short story collection and three novels. He has been a finalist for the CBC Literary Award in both the fiction and poetry categories. He was on the 'Longshortlist' for the 2018 ReLit Poetry Award, and his poems have been included in anthologies across the United States and Canada, including *The Best Canadian Poetry in English 2008, 2010 and 2014*. Jim is the founder and organizer of Canada's annual human rights poetry event *Meet Me in the Middle: Writers on Rights*. Visit Jim's website at [www.jimnason.com](http://www.jimnason.com).



**From the Jurors:** Riveting. Dramatic. Carnavalesque. With every turn of the page, Jim Nason's long poem about Rooster, Dog, Crow, Rat and some seagulls keeps the reader engaged with the mad, hilarious, outrageous and emotionally dynamic world of hormones and desire, sex and love, adultery and friendship. In this particular corner of the urban zoo, city intersections are sites of animal behaviour, and windy avenues are where somersaults happen. With every turn of the page, a new joke is offered up, critical or joyous, alluring or repelling, bringing the reader deeply into the humbling paradox of love despite "hard angles."

***Ledi* by Kim Trainor (Book\*hug Press)**

Kim Trainor's first collection, *Karyotype*, was published by Brick Books in 2015. *Ledi* appeared with Book\*hug in 2018. Her poetry has won the Gustafson Prize, the Great Blue Heron prize, and the Malahat Review Long Poem Prize, and has appeared in the 2013 *Global Poetry Anthology* and *The Best Canadian Poetry in English 2014*. She lives in Vancouver.



***From the Jurors:*** Trainor's poetry offers the reader a moving, powerful meditation on mourning as a burial of the dead and "preparing for life after death." The flowers and grasses found at a burial site of the Iron Age Pasyryk woman known as Ledi, or "the Lady," inspire memories of the narrator's dead lover, a man with whom she travelled the American desert and who named and identified all the wildflowers that they found on their way. Through her poems, Trainor weaves these two lives and deaths through the flora and fauna associated with burial practice, so that the past is folded into the present in a quietly stunning memorialization of loss, known and unknown.