

## Raymond Souster Award Shortlist 2014

The Raymond Souster Award is given for a book of poetry by a League of Canadian Poets member (all levels) published in the preceding year. The award honours Raymond Souster, an early founder of the League of Canadian Poets.

The award carries a \$1,000 prize. It is presented each year at the LCP Annual Poetry Festival and Conference in June, with the shortlist announced in April.

This year's shortlisted poets and books are:

***seldom seen road*** by Jenna Butler (NeWest Press)

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

***Her Red Hair Rises with the Wings of Insects*** by Catherine Graham (Wolsak & Wynn)

***Rebel Women*** by Vancy Kasper (Inanna Publications)

***Brilliant Falls*** by John Terpstra (Gaspereau Press)

***Birds, Metals, Stones & Rain*** by Russell Thornton (Harbour Publishing)

**2014 Jury:** Bruce Hunter, Laurence Hutchman, Sheila Martindale

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

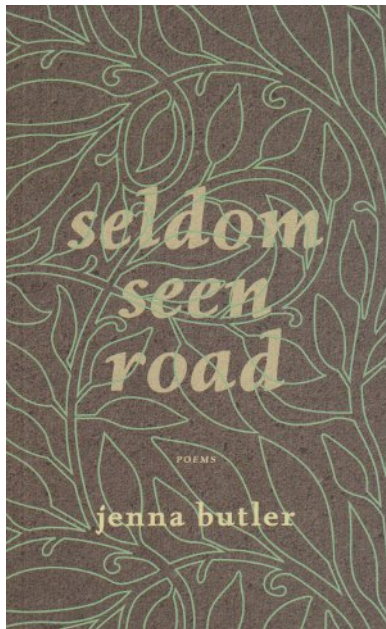
The winner of this award will be announced at the LCP Annual Poetry Festival and Conference in Toronto on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

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

## ***seldom seen road***

by Jenna Butler

(NeWest Press)



### **About the author:**



**Jenna Butler**

Jenna Butler was born in Norwich, England, close to the north Sea. Her family emigrated to Canada in the early eighties. Initially moving to Toronto and finally settling in Alberta. Butler holds a BA and B.Ed degrees from the University of Alberta, in addition to an MA and PhD in Creative and Critical Writing from University of East Anglia (UK). She is the author of two previous trade books of poetry, *Aphelion* (NeWest Press, 2010) and *Wells* (University of Alberta Press, 2012) as well as ten short collections with small presses in Canada, the United States, and Europe.

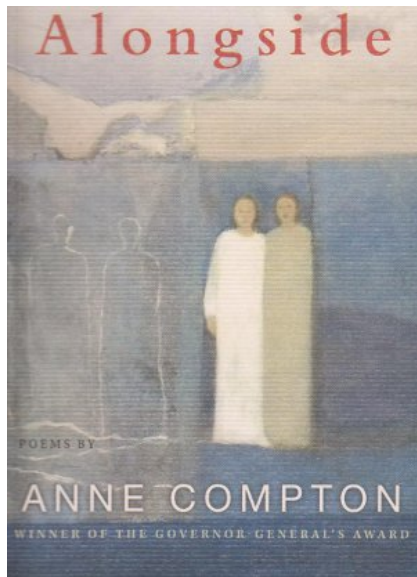
### **Judges' Comments:**

*seldom seen road* is a beautiful and poignant collection of poems evoking the vanishing history of the prairies in the tradition of Newlove, Suknaski and Sorestad. The poet learns, accepts, integrates, and incorporates the life of this land, finding a language of belonging. Butler is a poet who creates presence out of absence, finding the objects such as an I-nis'kim, "Buffalo Stone" which leads the reader to discover its larger meaning. In this collection, she pays tribute to women such as Nellie McClung, Mary Norton, (wife of Samuel Hearne) and the ten wives of Crowfoot, for them not to be forgotten. Jenna Butler affirms her own place, "always / out here I know where I stand."

## ***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.

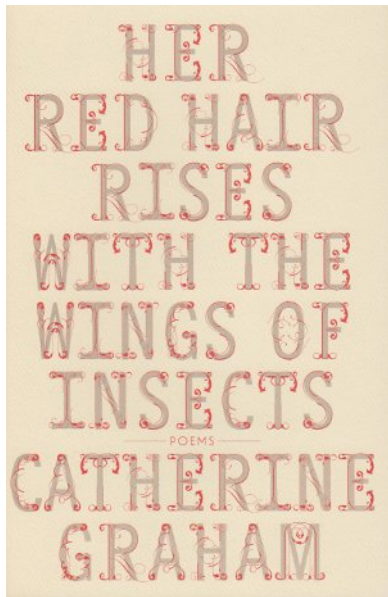
### **Judges' Comments:**

Every so often, one comes across a poet and sees what makes poetry, poetry. With a sudden flash of recognition, the reader stands before the cosmic stage and confronts all that is there. Anne Compton in *Alongside* writes masterfully about the exhilarating freedom of childhood memories, love expressed in a personal cartography and in the imaginative revelation of the history of a house and its former inhabitants. She writes with subtle music, startling analogies, extraordinary metaphors, *les mots justes* — blended in an orchestral arrangement with keen intelligence, powerful emotion and exquisite craft — all waiting for the reader to discover.

## ***Her Red Hair Rises with the Wings of Insects***

by Catherine Graham

(Wolsak & Wynn)



### **About the author:**



**Catherine Graham**

Catherine Graham is the author of four previous poetry collections, including the acclaimed trilogy *Pupa*, *The Red Element* and *Winterkill*. She teaches creative writing at the University of Toronto's School of Continuing Studies, and her poetry has appeared in journals and anthologies around the world. A new and selected volume of her poetry is forthcoming in the United Kingdom. She lives in Toronto.

### **Judges' Comments:**

Catherine Graham is an accomplished poet with a generous and whimsical mind, whose candid poetry offers us startling insights. *Her Red Hair Rises With the Wings of Insects*, is a series of glosas that pay homage to Canadian poet P.K. Page and Irish poet, Dorothy Malloy.

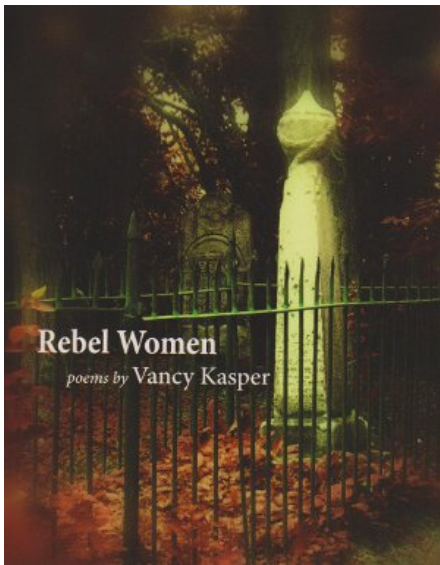
Graham's work is fresh, sophisticated and beautifully-crafted. It moves easily between imagined and natural worlds, from mashed potato dolls, to nipples to the Queen and Bobby Orr, in meditation and song.

Her muscular images and sensual language are wrought in lines that are as evocative as those of her mentors Seamus Heaney, Paul Durcan and Paul Muldoon.

## ***Rebel Women***

by Vancy Kasper

(Inanna Publications)



### **About the author:**



**Vancy Kasper**

Poet, novelist and journalist, Vancy Kasper was born and grew up in Toronto. She received her BA from the University of Toronto and joined the Toronto Star as reporter, feature writer and columnist. An early member of the Women's Writing Collective, she is the author of a poetry collection, *Mother I'm So Glad You Taught Me How to Dance* and award-winning Young Adult Fiction, *Always Ask for A Transfer*, *Street of Three Directions* and *Escape to Freedom*. Her poems have been published in *Fireweed*, *Canadian Woman Studies*, *Quarry*, *Poetry Toronto*, *Waves*, and *Landscape* and broadcast on television and radio.

### **Judges' Comments:**

This unusual book addresses the poet's foremothers, beginning with those involved in the 1837 Rebellion. The author's sense of family, of continuity and of inherited strengths provides a backdrop for her clear poetic voice.

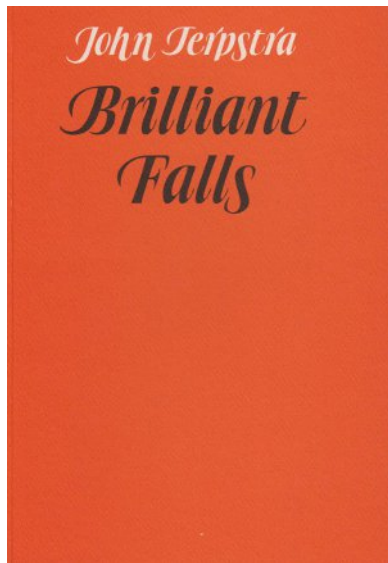
The inclusion of photographs adds authenticity, although the text alone gives us a tangible picture of the fortitude of these women, their ability to withstand so much in already difficult pioneer times. The writing indicates a restrained emotion and passion, lending an intensity to these reflective narrative poems.

Later poems serve as eulogies for contemporary women in the poet's life, and carry the same power and sensitivity.

## ***Brilliant Falls***

by John Terpstra

(Gaspereau Press)



### **About the author:**



**John Terpstra**

John Terpstra has published many books and chapbooks of poetry, the most recent of which, *Disarmament*, was shortlisted for the Governor General's Literary Award in 2004. He has also published three prose projects: *Falling into Place*, a creative investigation of a giant glacial sandbar; *The Boys, or, Waiting for the Electrician's Daughter*, the story of his wife's three brothers; and *Skin Boat: Acts of Faith and Other Navigations*, a frank reflection on faith and church in a secular era. Terpstra lives in Hamilton, ON.

### **Judges' Comments:**

John Terpstra writes about everyday matters, such as his mother's aging, relocation to a retirement home, and her death. The language may be matter-of-fact, but the emotions the reader feels are palpable. Other poems are more fanciful – Adam and Eve preparing the soil for planting; the Queen as drag-racer – and these convey a quiet and quirky humour. There is a harmonious blend of practicality and contemplation here, which leads to some *Wow!* moments.

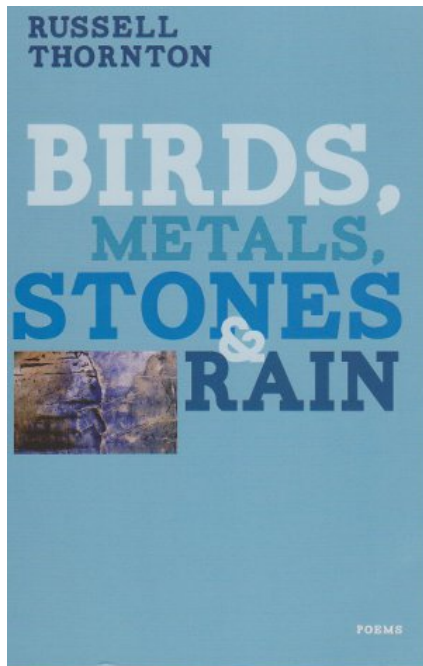
This book reflects the spirit of Raymond Souster, its apparent simplicity holding subtle layers of meaning. A wonderfully thought-provoking volume.



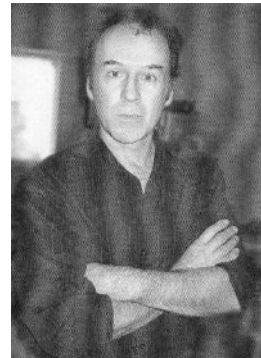
## ***Birds, Metals, Stones & Rain***

by Russell Thornton

(Harbour Publishing)



### **About the author:**



**Russell Thornton**

Russell Thornton is the author of several collections of poetry, among them *House Built of Rain* (Harbour, 2013), which was a finalist for the Dorothy Livesay Prize and the ReLit Award, and *Human Shore* (Harbour, 2006). His poetry had appeared widely in Canadian literary journals, and in anthologies such as *Rocksalt: An Anthology of Contemporary BC Poetry*, *Open Wide A Wilderness: Canadian Nature Poems*, the *Montreal International Poetry Prize 2011 Global Poetry Anthology* and *Best Canadian Poetry in English in 2012*. He won the League of Canadian Poets National Contest in 2000 and The Fiddlehead magazine's Ralph Gustafson Poetry Prize in 2009. He has lived in Montreal, Aberystwyth, Wales, and Salonica, Greece. He now lives where he grew up, in North Vancouver.

### **Judges' Comments:**

Raymond Souster wrote intimately and vividly about Toronto and its people, as does Vancouver-born Russell Thornton about his hometown. Like Souster, Thornton speaks not so much from a place, as through it, and his Vancouver becomes ours.

*Birds, Metal, Stone & Rain* is equal parts music, observation and compassion. There is much joy here, reflection, memory and melancholy too, but never regret.

Thornton's poems seldom veer far from the ocean. He understands the alternately harsh and redemptive cycle of tides and life. His wise poetry reminds us to cherish, as he so clearly does, all of life.

