

Raymond Souster Award Shortlist 2015

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 May, with the shortlist announced in April.

This year's shortlisted poets and books are:

Hyena Subpoena by Catherine Kidd (Popolo Press / Wired on Words)

Washita by Patrick Lane (Harbour Publishing)

Two Tragedies in 429 Breaths by Susan Paddon (Brick Books)

Pluck by Laisha Rosnau (Nightwood Editions)

Complicity by Adam Sol (McClelland & Stewart)

Janey's Arcadia by Rachel Zolf (Coach House Books)

2015 Jury: Micheline Maylor, Susan McMaster, D.C. Reid

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

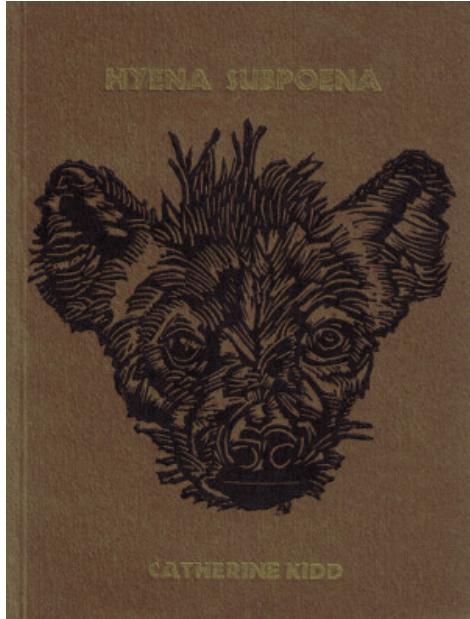
The winner of this award will be announced at the LCP Annual Poetry Festival and Conference in Winnipeg on May 30th, 2015.

For more information visit: www.poets.ca

Hyena Subpoena

by Catherine Kidd

(Popolo Press / Wired on Words)



About the author:



Catherine Kidd

Catherine Kidd is a Montreal-based writer/performer, best known for her zoology-themed performance poetry. A graduate of Concordia's MA program in Creative Writing, she was twice recipient of the Irving Layton Award. She has taught writing at Concordia, through the Quebec Writer's Federation, and also through the Fondation Metropolis Blue. Her writing appears in *Matrix*, *This Magazine*, *Toronto Quarterly*, *Branch*, and *P.E.N. International*. Her poem *Human Fish* opened the Spier Arts Poetry Festival in Cape Town, South Africa in 2007. That trip was the inspiration for the current solo show and cd/book, *Hyena Subpoena*.

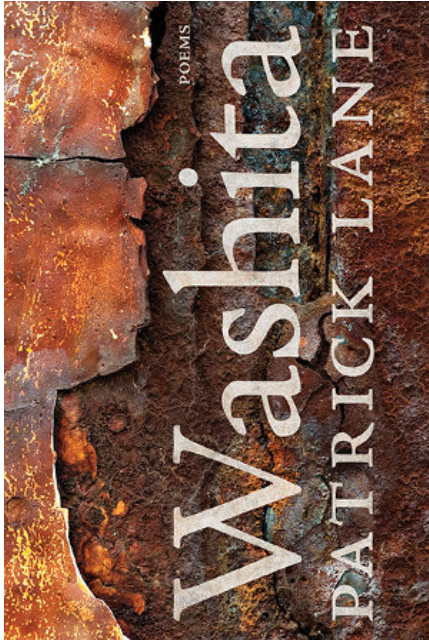
Judges' Comments:

A confluence of fable, narrative, and spoken word exhibits important messages about living in a harsh and bewildering world. Kidd shows a unique perspective in a deeply moving and wise way. *Hyena Subpoena* is moralistic and important for its carefully constructed use of language and sound play.

Washita

by Patrick Lane

(Harbour Publishing)



About the author:



Patrick Lane

Patrick Lane, considered by most writers and critics to be one of Canada's finest poets, was born in 1939 in Nelson, BC. He is an Officer of The Order of Canada and has won nearly every literary prize in Canada, from Governor General's Award to the Canadian Authors Association Award to the Dorothy Livesay Poetry Prize. Lane now makes his home in Victoria, BC, with his companion, the poet Lorna Crozier.

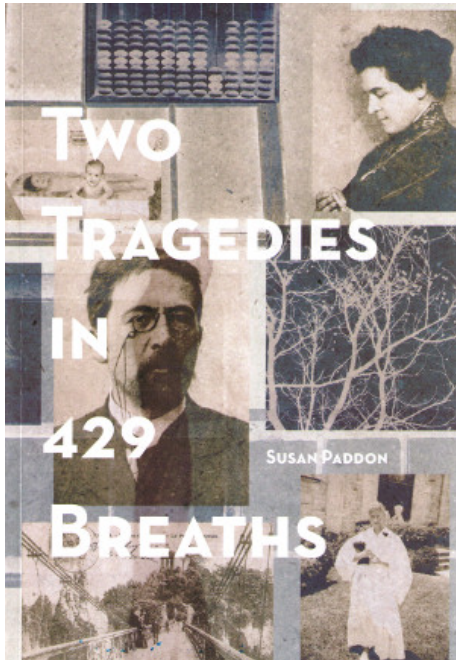
Judges' Comments:

At times startling, at times soft with nostalgia, always attentive to language and image. There is a deep and sensory tension between what is an interior experience and what is exterior. Deeply moving and beautiful. This is a mature poet's book infused with *sabi* (Japanese: the beauty and serenity that comes with age).

Two Tragedies in 429 Breaths

by Susan Paddon

(Brick Books)



About the author:



Susan Paddon

Susan Paddon's poetry has appeared in *The Antigonish Review*, *Arc Poetry Magazine*, *Desperately Seeking Susans*, *Eleven Eleven*, *Sifted*, *CV2* and *Geist Magazine*, among others. After attending McGill University, she moved to London, England, for several years before moving to Paris, France, where she met her husband. She writes poetry, short fiction and screenplays, and is currently working on a novel. She now lives with her husband in Margaree, Cape Breton.

Judges' Comments:

Susan Paddon's *Two Tragedies in 429 Breaths* offers a strong and original interplay between two narratives: her mother's final months of pulmonary illness, and Anton Chekhov's death from tuberculosis. Threaded with letters and voices of those around them, including characters from Chekhov's plays, *Two Tragedies* exemplifies how literary forebears can live within us as solace and illumination. The language is allusive, restrained, intensified by the startling juxtapositions of the story. This is poetry without fireworks, entirely convincing.

Pluck

by Laisha Rosnau

(Nightwood Editions)



About the author:



Laisha Rosnau

Laisha Rosnau is the author of the best-selling novel *The Sudden Snow* (McClelland & Stewart) and the Nightwood Editions poetry collections *Lousy Explorers*, nominated for the Pat Lowther Award, and *Notes on Leaving*, which won the Acorn-Plantos People's Poetry Prize. Rosnau's work has been published in Canada, the US, the UK and Australia, and she was recently anthologized in *White Ink: Poems on Mothers and Motherhood* and *Rocksalt: An Anthology of Contemporary BC Poetry*. Rosnau lives in Coldstream, BC, where she and her family are resident caretakers of Bishop Wild Bird Sanctuary.

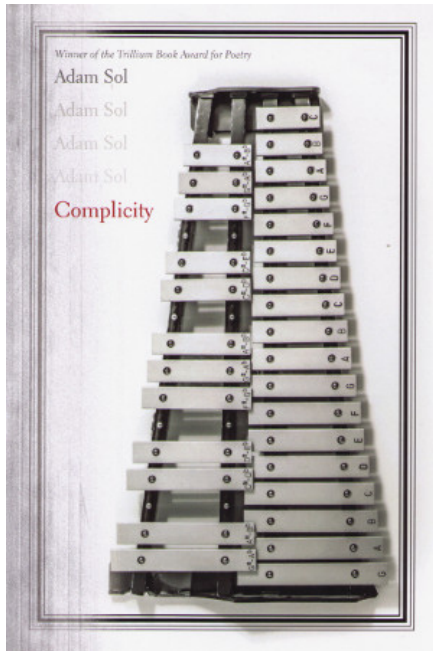
Judges' Comments:

A humane mind meeting what life places in her way and elucidating it precisely for the reader. Kids, family, partners, the warmth of human bodies, 'we call each other dude, as it suits some of us.' And carries on in 'the vernacular of one constantly agape', a life 'where nothing is more real than memory', which, of course, is not real at all. The everyday oddness, the simple yet unique: 'Peel oranges in unbroken spirals, prop the skin so it appears to be full.' *Pluck* is magic well observed, well put into words, for the lives we lead.

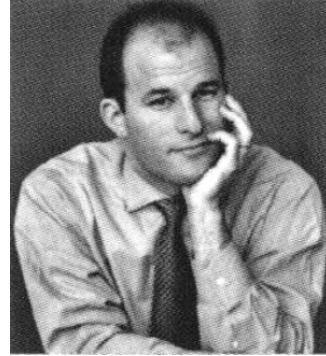
Complicity

by Adam Sol

(McClelland & Stewart)



About the author:



Adam Sol

Adam Sol is the author of three previous books of poetry, including *Jeremiah, Ohio*, a novel in poems that was shortlisted for the Trillium Book Award for Poetry; and *Crowd of Sounds*, which won the award in 2004. He is an Associate Professor of English at Laurentian University's campus in Barrie, Ontario and lives in Toronto with his family.

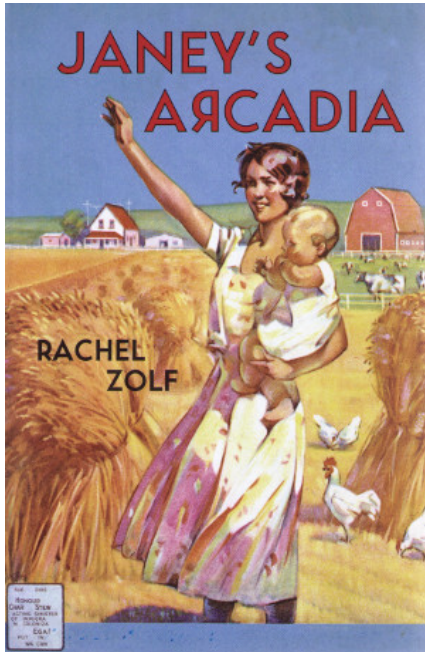
Judges' Comments:

Adam Sol's *Complicity* fully realizes the implications of its title with poetry that is philosophical and intellectual in an intimate, revelatory way. Structured around references to pop culture, it reaches beyond the personal to reflect with subtle irony on the state of current values. Sol exhibits close attention to craft, from the experimental "Watching Jack Layton's Funeral" to the traditional sonnet form of "Security Review"; attention to verbs is sharp, conjunctions jarring and evocative. Sophisticated poetry.

Janey's Arcadia

by Rachel Zolf

(Coach House Books)



About the author:



Rachel Zolf

Rachel Zolf's writing practice explores interrelated materialist questions concerning memory, history, knowledge, subjectivity, and the conceptual limits of language and meaning. She is particularly interested in how ethics founders on the shoals of the political. Her books of poetry include *Neighbour Procedure* (2010); *Human Resources* (2007), which won the Trillium Book Award for Poetry and was shortlisted for a Lambda Literary Award; *Masque* (2004), finalist for the Trillium Book Award for Poetry; and *Her Absence, this wanderer* (1999). She has taught at The New School and the University of Calgary and now lives and works in Toronto.

Judges' Comments:

An experimental book so good, it is the textbook for the next decade. If you want to find the edge, and write there, read this book. Ostensibly retelling the benign settling of Manitoba by non-aboriginals and their Ministers, it is a text of brutal irony, distorted racist interactions, the repeated questioning: 'Who Is This Jesus?' and rape in his name. Its OCR'd text of historical government pamphlets is further distorted by intentional misspellings, inserted puns on puns, resulting in more bangs per line than any other book you will read this year, and wickedly, subversively funny.