

Raymond Souster Award

Shortlist

The Raymond Souster Award is given for a book of poetry by a League of Canadian Poets member. The award honours Raymond Souster, an early founder of the League of Canadian Poets. The award carries a \$2,000 prize.



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Shortlist

Vox Humana by Adebe DeRango-Adem (Book*hug Press)

Shifting Baseline Syndrome by Aaron Kreuter (University of Regina Press)

Another Way to Split Water by Alycia Pirmohamed (Birlinn Ltd.)

Hurricane Watch: New and Collected Poems by Olive Senior (Carcenet Press)

Grappling Hook by Sarah Yi-Mei Tsiang (Palimpsest Press)

Whitemud Walking by Matthew James Weigel (Coach House Books)

Jurors

MLA Chernoff

Marjorie Bruhmuller

Evan J

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Vox Humana by Adebe DeRango-Adem

Book*hug Press



From the jurors: In *Vox Humana*, Adebe DeRango-Adem offers a politics and ethics of urgency in every poem. Pulsating with voices, these rhythms are alive as they “spook / the master’s language,” altering formal expectations and invoking lineages of poetic experimentation with distinction and exuberance. This book demands a humanism that exclaims, “butwhocaresnobigdealIwantmore” in its desire for “more breath.”

Adebe DeRango-Adem is a writer and former attendee of the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics (Naropa University), where she mentored with poets Anne Waldman and Amiri Baraka. She is the author of four full-length poetry books to date: *Ex Nihilo* (Frontenac House, 2010), *Terra Incognita* (Inanna Publications, 2015), *The Unmooring* (Mansfield Press, 2018), and *Vox Humana* (Book*hug Press, 2022). Her poem, “Vox Genus / Provectus,” was selected by poet Sonia Sanchez as the winner of the 2021 *Boston Review* Annual Poetry Contest. Adebe is a 2023 resident of the Choral Creation Lab, where selections from *Vox Humana* will be developed into an original choral composition in collaboration with fellow resident composers and the Amadeus Choir of Toronto.

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Shifting Baseline Syndrome by Aaron Kreuter University of Regina Press

"These are poems bright as raytubes, big screens the size of lives."
—GARY BARWIN



Shifting Baseline Syndrome

AARON KREUTER



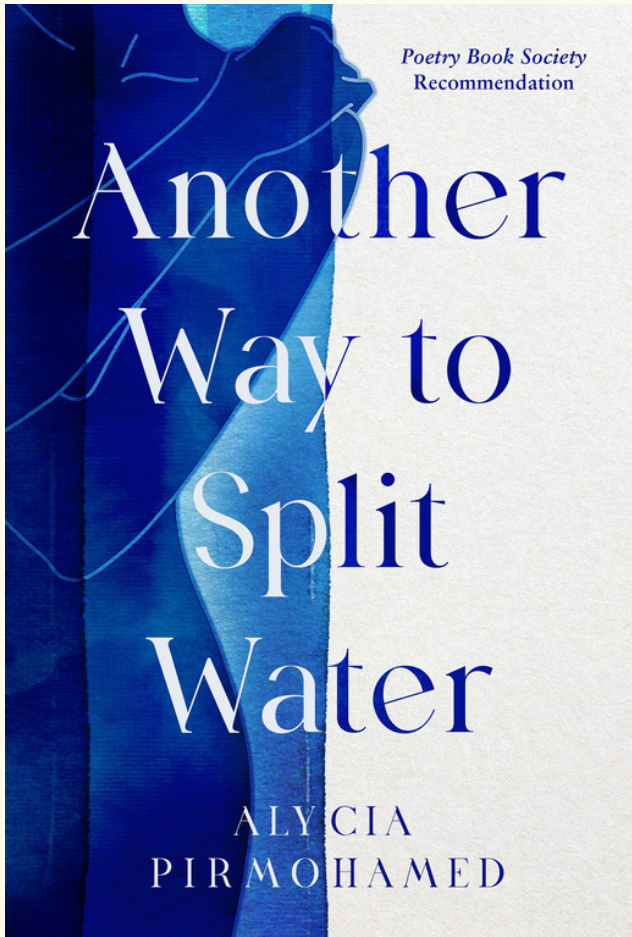
From the jurors: A media archaeology compounded and confounded by the legacy of tube TV, *Shifting Baseline Syndrome* reminds us to lend our lungs to fits of laughter, even as we gasp for air amidst humanity's series finale: Anthropocene. Without falling victim to didacticism or pessimism, Kreuter proffers a poetics of deep time, flipping between channels with trigger-happy zest, deconstructing everything from the Twittersphere and Zionism to the academic industrial complex and Auschwitz's proxy in X-Men. A would-be meet-cute scrounging for camaraderie at the end of history, this book is a stunning contribution to eco-literature and Jewish-Canadian writing alike.

Aaron Kreuter is the author of three books, the most recent of which, *Shifting Baseline Syndrome*, was a finalist for a Governor General's Literary Award and was included on the CBC Best Poetry Books of 2022 list. His work has appeared in such places as *The Literary Review of Canada*, *X-Ray Literature*, and *The Puritan*. *Lake Burntshore*, a novel set at a Jewish sleepover camp, is forthcoming from ECW Press. He lives in Toronto.

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Another Way to Split Water by Alycia Pirmohamed

Birlinn Ltd.



From the jurors: Threaded by fauna, spirituality, and the fluidity and multiplicity of place, Alycia Pirmohamed's *Another Way to Split Water* is affecting, refined, and elusive in its invocations of environmentalism, circumventing cliché through sprezzatura. Unwinding the reader's eye, the poems return focus to the delicacy of the word to reacquaint us with the concomitance of nature and poetics. With a refreshingly unpredictable and destabilizing diction—verbs and nouns and adjectives all swirling in the same river—every line is a reminder of the infinite ways to assemble a clause, every line ripples with wisdom, every line is a lyrical swim.

Alycia Pirmohamed is a Canadian-born poet based in Scotland. She is the author of the chapbooks *Hinge* and *Faces that Fled the Wind*, and the collaborative essay *Second Memory*, which was co-authored with Pratyusha. Alycia has held post-doctoral positions at the University of Edinburgh and at the University of Liverpool, and she received an MFA from the University of Oregon and a PhD from the University of Edinburgh. She currently teaches on the MSt. Creative Writing at the University of Cambridge. Alycia is the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2019 CBC Poetry Prize, a Pushcart Prize, and the 2020 Edwin Morgan Poetry Award.

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Hurricane Watch by Olive Senior

Carcanet Press



From the jurors: In Olive Senior's *Hurricane Watch*, earnestness and profound revelations galvanize decades of poetic brilliance. A collection of poems dating back to 1985, the text amasses a cacophony of distinctly spectral voices, demanding we bear witness to a patchwork of inequitable histories. The interpretative turbulence of these poems is a testament to Senior's ability to shore up intimate, yet meticulously researched and detailed, images of humility, strength, hope, and resilience. An emotional storm whose winds are unrelenting, it's in the best interest of readers to heed the book's title: be on the lookout for this hurricane, its path of devastation.

Olive Senior is the Poet Laureate of Jamaica 2021–24. She is the award-winning author of twenty books of fiction, nonfiction, poetry and children's literature and other published work. Her many awards include Canada's Writers Trust Matt Cohen Award for Lifetime Achievement, the OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature, the Commonwealth Writers Prize, an honorary doctorate from the University of the West Indies and the Gold Medal of the Institute of Jamaica. Her work has been adapted for radio and stage, translated into many languages and is taught internationally. Olive Senior is from Jamaica and lives in Toronto, Canada, but returns frequently to the Caribbean which remains central to her work.

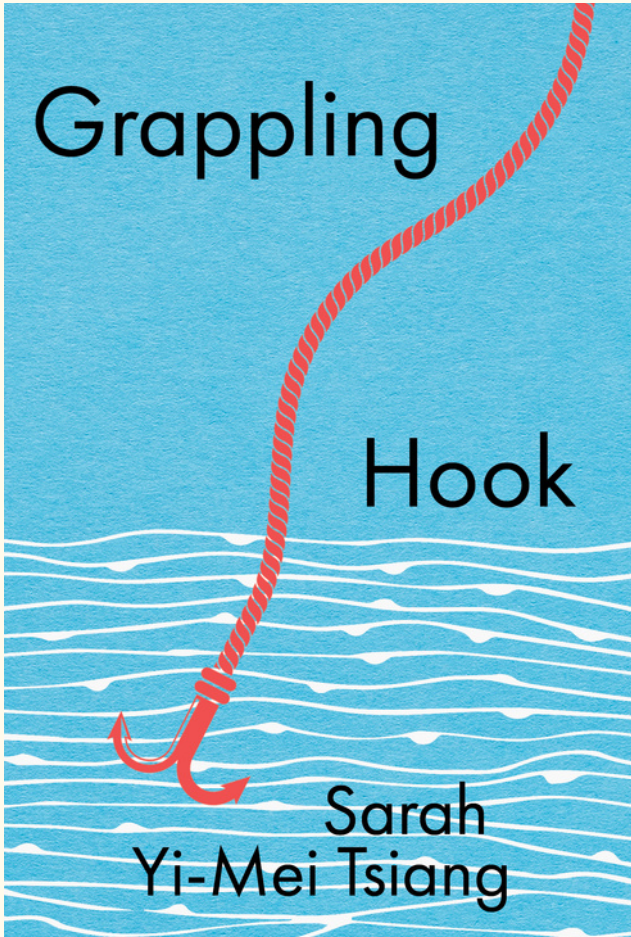
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Grappling Hook by Sarah Yi-Mei Tsiang

Palimpsest Press



From the jurors: With the utmost elegance and clarity, Sarah Yi-Mei Tsiang's *Grappling Hook* pursues the complex web of affects that arise from the day-to-day realities of parenthood. Exploring the delicate balance between conscientiousness and overprotection, teaching and buffering, non-violence and safeguarding, the text gifts us with a poetics of caregiving, one that finds the perfect balance between irreverent joy and the ineffable tinge of melancholic worry that acts as a kind of baseline for parenting.

Sarah Yi-Mei Tsiang is the author of *Grappling Hook* (2022) with Palimpsest Press, *Status Update* (2013), which was nominated for the Pat Lowther Award, the Gerald Lampert award-winning *Sweet Devilry* (2011). Her work has appeared in *Best Canadian Poetry* (2013, 2021, 2023,) and *Best of the Best Canadian Poetry*. She has been both longlisted and shortlisted for the CBC poetry prize as well as shortlisted for the UK's Forward Award. She is the editor of the poetry collection, *Desperately Seeking Susans* (2013), the Poetry Editor for *Arc Poetry Magazine*, the Creative Director at Poetry in Voice, and teaches in both the UBC optional residency MFA program and the Vancouver Manuscript Intensive. She is also the author of 8 children's books.

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Whitemud Walking by Matthew James Weigel Coach House Books



From the jurors: *Whitemud Walking* is a grueling genealogical exercise that interrupts settler epistemologies to reorient the ways we research and read. Embracing a tradition of conceptual writing with an enlivening eagerness, Weigel exposes complex ancestral memories that have, for centuries, been held hostage by the violence of state apparatuses, colonial historicity, and solitary archives. By disclosing how impersonal documents harbour personal trauma, *Whitemud Walking* isn't so much a book of poems as it is a vector for elusive forms of grief, bringing to the forefront what white supremacy has tried tirelessly to repress.

Matthew James Weigel is a Dene and Métis poet and artist. He is the designer for Moon Jelly House press and his words and art have been published in *Arc*, *The Polyglot*, and *The Mamawi Project*. Matthew is a National Magazine Award finalist, a Cécile E. Mactaggart Award winner, and winner of the 2020 *Vallum* Chapbook Award. His chapbook *It Was Treaty / It Was Me* is available now. *Whitemud Walking* is his debut collection.

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Photo credits:

- Photo of Aaron Kreuter by Rick O'Brien
- Photo of Adebe DeRango-Adem by Selena



Established in 1966, the League of Canadian Poets is Canada's largest professional organization for established and emerging Canadian poets. The League of Canadian Poets' mandate is to enhance the status of poets and foster professional poetry communities. The League works to enlarge the audience for poetry by encouraging publication, performance, education, and recognition of Canadian poetry locally, nationally, and internationally, and supports equitable and inclusive freedom of expression in Canada.