

The Newfoundland and Labrador Book Awards

Under the distinguished patronage of the Honourable Frank Fagan, CM, ONL, MBA, Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

McGrath, Peacock take home 2015 Newfoundland & Labrador Book Awards

(May 27, 2015 – St. John’s, NL) In a ceremony at Government House in St. John’s this afternoon, poet Carmelita McGrath was named winner of the E.J. Pratt Award for *Escape Velocity* published by Goose Lane Editions. Retired veterinarian Andrew Peacock won the Newfoundland and Labrador Book Award for Non-Fiction with his debut book *Creatures of the Rock: A Veterinarian’s Adventures in Newfoundland* published by Doubleday Canada. The wins represent a first for both well-established author McGrath and for novice author Peacock. Each winner received a cash prize of \$1,500. The four runners-up—Michael Crummey and Mary Dalton for poetry, and Alan Doyle and Janet Merlo for non-fiction—each received \$500.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Book Awards are sponsored by the Literary Arts Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador and administered by the Writers’ Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador under the distinguished patronage of The Honourable Frank Fagan, CM, ONL, MBA, Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador.

“This was an extraordinary year,” says Denise Flint, president of the Writers’ Alliance. “All three finalists for the E.J. Pratt Poetry Award are accomplished poets. In contrast, the finalists for the NL Book Award for Non-fiction represent debut books.”

“We are extremely grateful to Kathy Pratt LeGrow and the Jimmy Pratt Foundation for funding the E.J. Pratt Poetry Award again this year,” says Jennifer Morgan, president of the Literary Arts Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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“We thank WANL and anonymous donors who stepped up with one-time donations to ensure the Non-fiction Book Award went ahead this year. The Foundation welcomes funders who would like to take advantage of having their names associated with the Newfoundland and Labrador Book Awards.”

Non-fiction judges Robin McGrath, Bert Riggs, and Joan Sullivan said of *Creatures of the Rock*: “It was the laid back attitude of the people of Newfoundland and the offer of professional positions for him and his wife that brought Andrew Peacock to Newfoundland, but it was animals that kept him here. When we think of a veterinarian we usually think of a person who is trained to treat our cats, dogs and other house pets, and while Peacock did that as a sideline, his major clients were the cows, horses, sheep, goats and pigs of the communities of Conception and Trinity Bay, with the odd moose, caribou, whale, lynx and polar bear thrown in for good measure... *Creatures of the Rock* is a thoughtful and highly entertaining reflection on life as a veterinarian from someone who has truly become ‘one of us’.”

Poetry judges Robin Durnford, Sue Goyette and George Murray, said of *Escape Velocity*: “Each poem in Carmelita McGrath’s *Escape Velocity* is its own little journey, sometimes without any obvious destination. And yet her delicate rhythms pull us, almost gravitationally, into meditations such as “How to Leave an Island” where we stare with her over “a banned ocean, poised on the very edge of flight.” In her first collection in over a decade, McGrath offers us earthly objects that feel weightless because of the deftness of her language. By the time the final poem makes its escape we don’t want to go back.”

The Awards consider books released in the two previous years. In even-numbered years, fiction and children’s/YA literature are recognized, in alternate years; works of non-fiction and poetry are recognized.

This year’s E.J. Pratt Award was made possible, once again, by the generous sponsorship of the Jimmy Pratt Foundation. The Awards are also supported by *The Telegram*, Perfect Day, and the NLTA.

Established in 1987, the Writers’ Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador is a not-for-profit organization providing a supportive environment for writing in Newfoundland and Labrador, advocating on behalf of the well-being of the province’s writers, increasing public awareness of and celebrating the province’s authors, and fostering the growth of the provincial literary industry.

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Established in 2005, the Literary Arts Foundation of Newfoundland (LAFNL) and Labrador raises support for programs that involve the community in the literary arts, and fosters awareness, understanding and appreciation for the literature of this province. In addition to sponsoring the NL Book Awards, LAFNL offers an intense writing retreat every other autumn: Piper's Frith: Writing at Kilmory.

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