



MEDIA RELEASE

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Shortlist for 2017 Newfoundland and Labrador Credit Union Fresh Fish Award for Emerging Writers Announced

(November 4, 2017—ST. JOHN'S, NL) The shortlist for the 2017 Newfoundland and Labrador Credit Union (NLCU) Fresh Fish Award for Emerging Writers was announced today in St. John's. The announcement followed the Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador's (WANL) Annual General Meeting held at The Lantern.

The award, generously sponsored by the Newfoundland and Labrador Credit Union, is awarded to the best unpublished manuscript written by a resident of the province who has not published a book, or who has not had a book accepted for publication, in any genre on any platform or in any media at the time of submission. The award is intended to serve as an incentive for emerging writers in the province by providing them with financial support, recognition, and professional editing services for a book-length manuscript in any genre.

"Newfoundlanders and Labradorians are known throughout the world for their natural creativity, unique language, and knack for storytelling. It's what we do. It's who we are," says Allison Chaytor-Loveys, Chief Executive Officer of the Newfoundland and Labrador Credit Union (NLCU). "As a sponsor of the NLCU Fresh Fish Award we are honoured to provide the financial support to ensure the tradition flourishes by recognizing and rewarding the talented writers right here in our province."

The winning author will receive: a cash prize of \$5,200; \$1,000 towards professional editing services for the winning manuscript; and a miniature replica of *Man Nailed to a Fish* by sculptor Jim Maunder. The runners-up will each receive \$1,200. The biennial award is presented by the Literary Arts Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador (LAFNL) in partnership with WANL.

The three finalists this year are (in alphabetical order by last name):

- Terry Doyle for his short story collection, *We All Do*
- Matthew Hollett for his poetry collection, *Optic Nerve*
- Liz Solo for her novel, *Phreak*

Their work was chosen from submissions of fiction and poetry. The jury members were Bridget Canning, Trudy Morgan-Cole, and Paul Rowe.

The winner will be announced at a ceremony on Thursday, November 23 at Christina Parker Gallery in St. John's. The announcement will be preceded by readings from the shortlisted authors.

Shorlisted Author Bios:

Terry Doyle is a writer from the Goulds, Newfoundland. Winner of the 2017 Percy Janes First Novel Award, his work has appeared at Newfoundland Quarterly Online and, soon, in *Riddle Fence*.

Matthew Hollett is a writer and visual artist in St. John's. His creative nonfiction and poetry often includes photographs or other images, and his book of poems, *Optic Nerve*, is about photography and seeing. Matthew won The Malahat Review's 2017 Open Season Award for Creative Nonfiction, and was longlisted for the 2017 CBC Creative Nonfiction Prize and 2016 CBC Poetry Prize. His work has been published most recently in The Malahat Review and PRISM International, and in 2017 he was selected as Newfoundland Quarterly's inaugural Creative Nonfiction Fellow.

Liz Solo is a performance and media artist, activist and musician. She has an extensive catalog as a songwriter and her articles on the arts and online culture have been published by The Canadian Theatre Review, Switch Magazine, Reverb Magazine, The Newfoundland Quarterly and The Scope. Her work as a playwright has appeared in collections by the Playwrights Canada Press and her screenplay *the machine* is an NL Arts and Letters and a Joy Award winner.

Jury Comments:

We All Do is a collection of short stories with dirt under its fingernails and a gritty appreciation for contemporary life, especially contemporary Newfoundland life. Vivid details of everyday existence are evoked in striking images and sentences that leap off the page with energy and originality. The rich cast of characters includes a young woman half-heartedly trying to convince her boyfriend that they should attend the Beaumont Hamel memorial service, a grieving loner roaming the streets of Rabbittown with a concealed hammer up his sleeve, and a dog owner determined to establish himself as the alpha male in relationship to his pet. The voices are distinct, the perspectives fresh and often unexpected.

Optic Nerve — note the subtle *double entendre* of the title — is a finely wrought collection. The poems are at times gamesome, often insightful, and, occasionally, unabashedly romantic. Early on, the closed blink of an eye is described as "that entoptic theatre where you spend a third of your life waiting for the curtain to rise." To me, this is an original thought, and this collection is full of them. This is a clever, vivacious, eminently readable collection.

The universe of *Phreak* is richly detailed, compelling, clever, terrifying, and well-written. The description of dystopian St. John's is nicely layered satire and social statement. The jury found it an intriguing, entertaining, and provoking read. The setting and supporting characters are well crafted. It stood out from other submissions as a unique and highly creative work.

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