



THE GRIFFIN TRUST
For Excellence In Poetry

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Carolyn Forché

Scott Griffin

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Robin Robertson

David Young

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The Griffin Trust For Excellence In Poetry
presents **SEAMUS HEANEY** with its seventh
LIFETIME RECOGNITION AWARD

TORONTO – Wednesday, June 6, 2012 – Seamus Heaney, winner of the 1995 Nobel Prize in Literature ‘for works of lyrical beauty and ethical depth’, was honoured with The Griffin Trust For Excellence In Poetry’s 2012 Lifetime Recognition Award at this evening’s Griffin Poetry Prize Shortlist Readings event. Trustee Robin Robertson paid tribute to Seamus Heaney and presented him with his award. The announcement was met with great enthusiasm and applause from the house.

Scott Griffin commented “Seamus Heaney’s acceptance of the Lifetime Recognition Award brings great honour and prestige to the Griffin Poetry awards.”

Seamus Heaney was born and educated in Northern Ireland. His first three books of poems were written in the sixties, when he was recognised as one of a new generation of poets from Ulster. In 1972, Heaney moved with his family from Belfast to County Wicklow in the Irish Republic, where his writing deepened and darkened as the northern ‘Troubles’ intensified. During this period he published *North*, *Field Work*, *Sweeney Astray*, and his essay collection, *Preoccupations*. In the eighties and nineties he continued to publish poetry, prose and translations, including *Station Island*, *Seeing Things*, *The Cure at Troy* (a version of Sophocles’ *Philoctetes*) and *The Redress of Poetry* (taken from lectures given during his years as Professor of Poetry at Oxford, 1989-94).

Since receiving the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1995, Heaney has published four further volumes of poetry (*The Spirit Level*, *Electric Light*, *District and Circle* and, most recently, *Human Chain* which was shortlisted for the 2011 Griffin Poetry Prize) as well as a translation of the Old English epic, *Beowulf*, and *The Burial at Thebes*, a translation of Sophocles’ *Antigone*. An overall view of his work is available in *Opened Ground*, a volume of his selected poems, and *Finders Keepers, Selected Prose 1971-2001*. He is the recipient of many honorary degrees, including ones from Trinity College, Dublin, Oxford University, Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Stockholm, Coimbra, and the Jagellonian University in Krakow.



He is a member of Aosdána, the Irish academy of writers and artists, a fellow of The British Academy and the Royal Irish Academy, a Companion of Literature in The Royal Society of Literature, a foreign member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, a Commandeur de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres in France and an Honorary Member of the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences.

About The Griffin Trust For Excellence In Poetry Lifetime Recognition Award

The trustees first presented the Lifetime Recognition Award to pay tribute to the work and achievements of international artists working in poetry. Past recipients are: Robin Blaser (Canada) 2006; Tomas Tranströmer (Sweden) 2007; Ko Un (South Korea) 2008; Hans Magnus Enzensberger (Germany) 2009; Adrienne Rich (USA) 2010; and Yves Bonnefoy (France) 2011.

About The Griffin Trust For Excellence In Poetry

The Griffin Trust was founded in April 2000 by Chairman Scott Griffin, along with Trustees Margaret Atwood, Robert Hass, Michael Ondaatje, Robin Robertson and David Young. In 2004 Carolyn Forché was named a Trustee and joined the list of internationally acclaimed writers who sit on the board of The Griffin Trust.

- 30-

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