



**THE GRIFFIN TRUST  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CHARLES WRIGHT'S *SCAR TISSUE***

**AND**

**DON MCKAY'S *STRIKE/SLIP***

**WIN THE 2007 GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE**

**TORONTO, June 6, 2007** – Charles Wright's *Scar Tissue* and Don McKay's *Strike/Slip* are the International and Canadian winners of the seventh annual Griffin Poetry Prize. The C\$100,000 Griffin Poetry Prize, the richest poetry prize in the world for a single volume of poetry, is divided between the two winners. The prize is for first edition books of poetry published in 2006, and submitted from anywhere in the world.

The awards event was hosted by Scott Griffin, founder of the prize. Renowned poet Matthew Rohrer was the featured speaker. Judge Karen Solie announced the International winner and John Burnside announced the Canadian winner of the 2007 Griffin Poetry Prize.

Hundreds of guests celebrated the awards, including Canada's former Governor General, the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson; The Honourable Caroline di Cocco, Minister of Culture; renowned Canadian authors Margaret Atwood and Michael Ondaatje; and internationally acclaimed British poet Robin Robertson, author of *Swithering*, winner of the 2006 Forward Poetry Prize for Best Poetry Collection of the Year; and poets Carolyn Forché and Robert Hass, former US Poet Laureate.

The theme of the gala event, held at Toronto's Stone Distillery, was *Commedia del Arte*, evoking the colours, décor and ambiance of a romantic Tuscan street fair. In keeping with the theme, guests dined on bocconcini and tomato salad with balsamic vinaigrette reduction, provimi veal tenderloin with fig and apricot sauce, assorted vegetables, and a wide variety of exotic desserts.

The judges for the 2007 prize are the distinguished poets John Burnside (Dunfermline, Scotland), Charles Simic (New Hampshire, USA) and Karen Solie (Toronto, Canada). They each read an astonishing 483 eligible works of poetry, including 18 translations, written by poets from 35 countries from around the world. The judges also selected poems from the shortlist to compile *The Griffin Poetry Prize Anthology: A Selection of the 2007 Shortlist*, edited by Karen Solie and published by House of Anansi Press. Royalties generated from the anthologies, published annually, are donated to UNESCO's World Poetry Day. As in past years, copies of the submitted poetry books are being donated to Corrections Canada.



All short listed poets read excerpts from their books at a sold-out event for more than 800 people at the MacMillan Theatre on June 5<sup>th</sup>. That night, the legendary poet Tomas Tranströmer (Stockholm, Sweden) was honoured with The Griffin Trust For Excellence In Poetry's Lifetime Recognition Award. Trustee Robert Hass paid tribute to Tranströmer and Scott Griffin presented him with his award. This is the second year that the Griffin Poetry Prize has endowed a Lifetime Recognition Award. Last year's honours went to Robin Blaser.

The 2007 Griffin Poetry Prize shortlist is comprised of books by three Canadian poets – Ken Babstock's *Airstream Land Yacht*, published by House of Anansi Press; Don McKay's *Strike/Slip*, published by McClelland & Stewart; and Priscila Uppal's *Ontological Necessities*, published by Exile Editions; and four international poets – Paul Farley's *Tramp in Flames*, published by Picador; Rodney Jones' *Salvation Blues*, published by Houghton Mifflin; Frederick Seidel's *Ooga-Booga*, published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux and Charles Wright's *Scar Tissue*, published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

The judges are selected on an annual basis by the Griffin Poetry Prize Trustees, Margaret Atwood, Carolyn Forché, Robert Hass, Michael Ondaatje, Robin Robertson and David Young.

The Griffin Trust was created in 2000 to serve and encourage excellence in poetry written in or translated into English anywhere in the world.

- 30-

For further information please contact:

Press:

Elana Rabinovitch  
Press Relations  
Email: [press@griffinpoetryprize.com](mailto:press@griffinpoetryprize.com)

General Inquiries:

Ruth Smith  
Manager  
Email: [info@griffinpoetryprize.com](mailto:info@griffinpoetryprize.com)

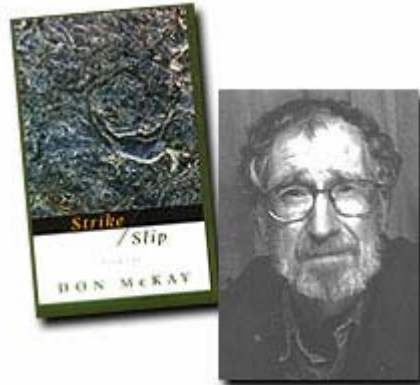
Publicity:

June Dickenson  
Publicity  
Email: [publicity@griffinpoetryprize.com](mailto:publicity@griffinpoetryprize.com)



**THE GRIFFIN TRUST**  
For Excellence In Poetry

THE 2007 GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE  
Canadian Winner



***Strike/Slip* • Don McKay**  
McClelland & Stewart

**Judges' Citation:** "In *Strike/Slip*, Don McKay walks us out to the uncertain ground between the known and unknown, between the names we have given things and things as they are. This is wonder's territory, and from within it McKay considers a time "before mind or math" before rock, in human hands, turned over in the mind, becomes stone. The poems confront the strangeness and inadequacy of using language to address the point at which language fails – the point where, "wild and incompetent, / you have no house" – and suggest that in such an unsettled state we might truly pay attention. In McKay's work, attention is the foundation of a poetics and an ethics in which otherness is respected, indeed cherished, for its ability to unhouse. But *Strike/Slip* also speaks to the intimacy of our relationships with time. How, at once metaphysical, practical, and intuitive, the weight of it is thought, felt in the body, and discerned in the landscape as sediment and growth, rust and erosion. McKay's meditations on time's evidence acquire a similar heft, proposing, in their discipline of mind and generosity of spirit, a way to be at home in the world. A book of patience, courage, and quiet eloquence, *Strike/Slip* manifests, like quartz, 'Some act of pure attention .... simple, naked, perilously perfect'."

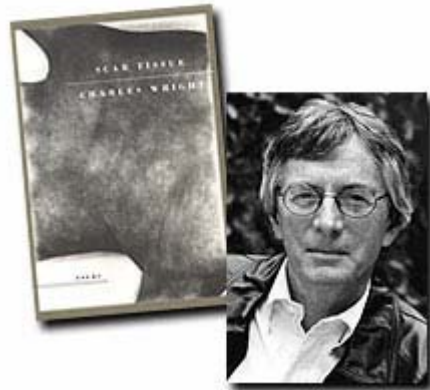
**Biography:** Don McKay has published 10 previous works of poetry. He is the winner of two Governor General's Literary Awards for Poetry for *Night Field* (1991) and *Another Gravity* (2000). He has been shortlisted twice for the Griffin Poetry Prize, first in 2001 for *Another Gravity* and most recently in 2004 for *Camber: Selected Poems*, which was also named a *Globe and Mail* Notable Book of the Year. Don McKay lives in British Columbia, Canada.

**Summary:** Don McKay walks the strike/slip fault between poetry and landscape, sticks its strange nose into the cold silence of geologic time, meditates on marble, quartz, and gneiss, and attends to the songs of ravens and thrushes, and the clamour of the industrialized bush. Behind these poems lies the urge to engage the tectonics of planetary dwelling with the rickety contraption of language, and to register the stress, sheer, and strain – but also the astonishment – engendered by that necessary failure.



**THE GRIFFIN TRUST**  
For Excellence In Poetry

**The 2007 Griffin Poetry Prize**  
International Winner



***Scar Tissue* • Charles Wright**  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux

**Judges' Citation:** "At the heart of every poem is a journey of discovery. Something is being found out," Charles Wright has written. In his poems, the same old world we look at every day without seeing it, be it a tree in the yard, the bird in that tree, the branch swaying after the bird has flown, is the subject of endless interest. For Wright, reality is not stable; it changes with the seasons and has to be rediscovered again and again. "I write out my charms and spells / against the passage of light / and gathering evil," he writes in his new book. The mind in the act of finding what will suffice in the face of one's own mortality is Wright's inexhaustible theme. His spiritual and philosophical problem is that he is a "God-fearing agnostic" sure only of his need to question everything. What makes his poems memorable is his seemingly inexhaustible ability to see things with new eyes. In *Scar Tissue*, as in his other books, he is a poet of great originality and beauty."

**Biography:** Charles Wright's previous books of poetry include *The Grave of the Right Hand* (1970); *Hard Freight* (1973); *Bloodlines* (1975); *China Trace* (1977); *The Southern Cross* (1981); *Country Music: Selected Early Poems* (1982); *The Other Side of the River* (1984); *Zone Journals* (1988); *The World of the Ten Thousand Things: Poems 1980 – 1990* (1990); *Chickamauga* (1995), which won the 1996 Academy of American Poets' Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize; *Black Zodiac* (1997), which received the 1998 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry; *Appalachia* (1998); *Negative Blue: Selected Later Poems* (2000); *A Short History of the Shadow* (2002); and *Buffalo Yoga* (2004). He has received a Guggenheim Fellowship (1975), the National Book Award in Poetry (1983), and the PEN Translation Prize for his translation of the Italian poet Eugenio Montale's *The Storm and Other Things*. Charles Wright is a professor of English at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, where he also lives.

**Summary:** In his new collection, Charles Wright investigates the tenuous relationship between description and actuality--"thing is not an image"--but also reaffirms the project of attempting to describe, to capture the natural world and the beings in it, although he reminds us that landscape is not his subject matter but his technique: that language was always his subject--language and "the ghost of god." And in the dolomites, the clouds, stars, wind, and water that populate these poems, "something un-ordinary persists." -- Booklist

**NOTE:** Summaries taken from promotional materials supplied by the publisher, unless otherwise noted.

