



**THE GRIFFIN TRUST
For Excellence In Poetry**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gjertrud Schnackenberg's *Heavenly Questions*

AND

Dionne Brand's *Ossuaries*

WIN THE 2011 GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE

TORONTO – Wednesday, June 1, 2011 – Gjertrud Schnackenberg's *Heavenly Questions* and Dionne Brand's *Ossuaries* are the International and Canadian winners of the 2011 annual Griffin Poetry Prize. They each received \$65,000 CDN in prize money.

The Griffin Poetry Prize was founded in 2000 to serve and encourage excellence in poetry. The prize is for first edition books of poetry written in, or translated into, English and submitted from anywhere in the world.

The awards ceremony, attended by some 400 invited guests, was held in the Fermenting Cellar at the Stone Distillery and hosted by Scott Griffin, founder of the prize, and Trustees Carolyn Forché, Michael Ondaatje, Robin Robertson and David Young.

The Judges for the 2011 Griffin Poetry Prize are Tim Lilburn (Canada), Colm Toibín (Ireland) and Chase Twichell (United States). These distinguished writers and poets each read 450 books of poetry, received from 37 countries around the globe, including 20 translations. The Judges are selected annually by the Trustees of The Griffin Trust For Excellence In Poetry.

On the previous evening, the shortlisted poets read excerpts from their books at a sold-out event for more than 1,000 people in downtown Toronto at The Royal Conservatory, TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning, Koerner Hall.



The 2011 Griffin Poetry Prize shortlist features collections by three Canadian poets and four international poets:

- Dionne Brand's *Ossuaries*, published by McClelland & Stewart
- Suzanne Buffam's *The Irrationalist*, published by House of Anansi Press
- John Steffler's *Lookout*, published by McClelland & Stewart

- Seamus Heaney's *Human Chain*, published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux
- Khaled Mattawa's translation of *Adonis: Selected Poems* by Adonis, published by Yale University Press
- Philip Mosley's translation of *The Book of the Snow* by François Jacqmin, published by Arc Publications
- Gjertrud Schnackenberg's *Heavenly Questions*, published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Trustee Michael Ondaatje presented each poet with a leather-bound edition of their book and a \$10,000 honorarium.

During the evening, renowned French poet and essayist Yves Bonnefoy was honoured with **The Griffin Trust For Excellence In Poetry's 2011 Lifetime Achievement Award**. Trustee Carolyn Forché paid tribute to Yves Bonnefoy and presented him with his award. Universally known for his clear and distinctive poetic style, he has published translations of Yeats, Petrarch, Keats and Shakespeare. As an art historian, he has written critiques of artists such as Miró and Giacometti. The surprise announcement was met with great enthusiasm and a standing ovation from the house.

The Griffin Poetry Prize Anthology: A Selection of the 2011 Shortlist, edited by Tim Lilburn and published by House of Anansi Press, is now available at most retail bookstores. Royalties generated from the anthologies, published annually, are donated to UNESCO's World Poetry Day.

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For further information please contact:

Press:
June Dickenson
Email: press@griffinpoetryprize.com

General Inquiries:
Ruth Smith
Manager
Email: info@griffinpoetryprize.com