



THE GRIFFIN TRUST
For Excellence In Poetry

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Autobiography of Death

Don Mee Choi, translated from the Korean written by Kim Hyesoon

and

Quarrels

by Eve Joseph

WIN THE 2019 GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE

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TORONTO – Thursday, June 6, 2019 – *Autobiography of Death* by Don Mee Choi, translated from the Korean written by Kim Hyesoon (New Directions) and *Quarrels* by Eve Joseph (Anvil Press) are the International and Canadian winners of the 2019 Griffin Poetry Prize. They each received C\$65,000 in prize money.

The Griffin Poetry Prize was founded in 2000 to encourage and celebrate 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 320 invited guests, was held in the Fermenting Cellar in The Distillery Historic District. Scott Griffin, founder of the prize, and trustees Mark Doty, Carolyn Forché, Marek Kazmierski, Jo Shapcott, Karen Solie, Ian Williams and David Young hosted the event where the guests enjoyed readings by Nicole Brossard, The Griffin Trust For Excellence In Poetry's 2019 Lifetime Recognition Award recipient, and a recitation of the poem "Star Gazer" by Dominique Christina, by Catrícia Hiebert, a 2019 national winner of Poetry In Voice/Les voix de la poésie.

The judges for the 2019 Griffin Poetry Prize are Ulrikka Gernes (Denmark), Kim Maltman (Canada) and Srikanth Reddy (US). These distinguished writers and poets each read 510 books of poetry, received from 32 countries around the globe, including 37 translations. The trustees of The Griffin Trust For Excellence In Poetry select the judges annually.



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The 2019 Griffin Poetry Prize shortlist features four International and three Canadian poetry collections:

- Raymond Antrobus's *The Perseverance*, published by Pinned in the Margins
- Daniel Borzutzky's *Lake Michigan*, published by University of Pittsburgh Press
- Don Mee Choi's translation from the Korean of *Autobiography of Death* written by Kim Hyesoon, published by New Directions
- Ani Gjika's translation from the Albanian of *Negative Space* written by Luljeta Lleshanaku, published by Bloodaxe Books
- Dionne Brand's *The Blue Clerk*, published by McClelland & Stewart
- Eve Joseph's *Quarrels*, published by Anvil Press
- Sarah Tolmie's *The Art of Dying*, published by McGill-Queen's University Press.

On June 5 the poets read excerpts from their books at the Shortlist Readings to an audience of 1,000 people, in Toronto in Koerner Hall at The Royal Conservatory, TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning. Trustee Karen Solie presented each poet with a leather-bound edition of their book and \$10,000 for their participation in the Readings.

During the evening, The Griffin Trust For Excellence In Poetry's 2019 Lifetime Recognition Award was presented to Nicole Brossard. Poet, novelist and essayist, twice Governor General's Award winner for poetry, she has published more than thirty books since 1965. She is an officer of the Order of Canada, chevalière of the National Order of Quebec, and a member of l'Académie des lettres du Québec. Her work has been widely translated into English and Spanish, and is also available in many languages, including German, Italian, Japanese, Slovenian, Romanian, Norwegian, Catalan, and Portuguese.

Trustee Carolyn Forché paid tribute to Nicole Brossard and presented her with the award.



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THE GRIFFIN TRUST
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2019 International Winner



Autobiography of Death • Don Mee Choi, translated from the Korean written by Kim Hyesoon
New Directions

Biography: Born in Seoul, South Korea, Don Mee Choi is the author of *The Morning News is Exciting* (2010), and *Hardly War* (2016). She has received a Whiting Award, Lannan Literary Fellowship, Lucien Stryk Translation Prize, and the 2019 DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Fellowship.

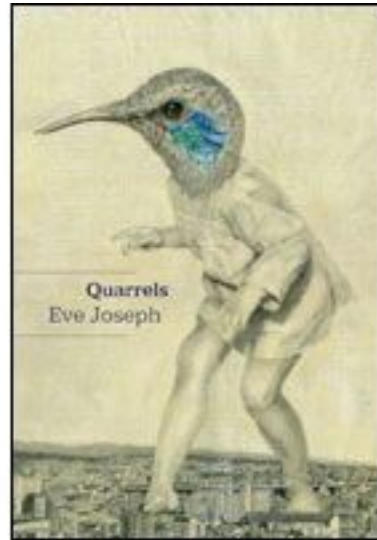
Kim Hyesoon, born in 1955, is one of the most prominent and influential contemporary poets of South Korea. She was the first female poet to receive the prestigious Kim Su-yong and Midang awards, and has been translated into Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Spanish, and Swedish. Her most recent books include *I'm OK, I'm Pig!* (2014), and *Poor Love Machine* (2016).

Judges' Citation: "In the grievous wake of the Sewol Ferry incident of 2014, the Korean poet Kim Hyesoon composed a cycle of forty-nine poems—one for each day the dead must await reincarnation—to produce a harrowing work of shock, outrage, and veneration for the children lost to this disaster. Through Don Mee Choi's extraordinary translations, we hear the clamorous registers of Kim Hyesoon's art—a transnational collision of shamanism, Modernism, and feminism—yield 'a low note no one has ever sung before.' That otherworldly tone may sound like life itself, the poet sings, 'for even death can't enter this deep inside me.'"



THE GRIFFIN TRUST
For Excellence In Poetry

2019 Canadian Winner



***Quarrels* • Eve Joseph**
Anvil Press

Biography: Eve Joseph's two previous books of poetry, *The Startled Heart* (2004) and *The Secret Signature of Things* (2010) were both nominated for the Dorothy Livesay Award. Her nonfiction book, *In the Slender Margin* (2014) won the Hubert Evans award for nonfiction. Joseph grew up in North Vancouver, British Columbia, and now lives in Victoria.

Judges' Citation: "In *Quarrels*, Eve Joseph's delightful collection of prose poems, you enter the marvelous and that is the truth! The poet has surrendered herself to the realm of the illogical, trusting that it has a logic of its own, and the outcome is, indeed, a new music. These poems are intriguing spaces and moments defeating the boundaries of the real, but rest assured, Joseph leads you by the hand with warmth, wit and empathy.

Perhaps these poems are crystallisations of a deeply human, spiritual knowledge, gathered over decades working in a hospice. Joseph's previous book, the exceptional memoir, *In the Slender Margin*, renders this experience. Certainly, without gravity, poems wouldn't be able to sing. As distillations of life, these poems, with beauty and charm, hold their own credibility: an omnipresent, merely-in-glimpses-tangible marvelousness, miraculously fastened to the pages of a single slender volume that will fit into most pockets and assure magnificent company on any given journey."