



**THE GRIFFIN TRUST
For Excellence In Poetry**

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**CHRISTIAN BÖK'S *EUNOIA* AND ALICE NOTLEY'S *DISOBEDIENCE*
WIN THE 2002 GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE**

TORONTO, May 30, 2002 – The Canadian and International winners of the 2002 Griffin Poetry Prize are **Christian Bök's *Eunoia***, and **Alice Notley's *Disobedience***, it was announced tonight at the second annual awards event. The C\$80,000 award, the most generous international poetry prize, is divided between the two winners. This year's prize is for first edition books of poetry published in 2001.

Hosted by Scott Griffin, Chairman of The Griffin Trust For Excellence In Poetry, and Emceed by actor Albert Schultz, the ceremonies featured this year's judges, poets Robert Creeley (USA), Dionne Brand (Canada) and Michael Hofmann (UK). Brand announced the International winner, and last year's International winner, Heather McHugh, announced the Canadian winner.

In addition, it was announced that the two winners have been invited to read at this year's Edinburgh International Book Festival on August 24th by Festival Director Catherine Lockerbie.

Among the 300 guests celebrating the awards were poets, poetry publishers and other literary luminaries including the Griffin Poetry Prize Trustees, Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje, David Young and Robin Robertson who flew in from the UK for the festivities.

The poetic ambiance of the evening was enhanced by the décor – a picturesque sylvan glade of spring flowers and greenery, transforming The Berkeley Church into an environment reminiscent of Wordsworth's "The Daffodils."

The evening before the seven shortlisted poets gave a reading at a sold-out Special Harbourfront Reading Series Event. In addition to *Eunoia* and *Disobedience*, the Canadian shortlist runners-up are *Sheep's Vigil by a Fervent Person* by Eirin Moure, and *Short Haul Engine* by Karen Solie. On the International shortlist are *Maraca New and Selected Poems 1965-2000* by Victor Hernández Cruz, *Homer: War Music* by Christopher Logue, and *Conscious and Verbal* by Les Murray, his second year on the Griffin Poetry Prize shortlist.

The Griffin Trust was created to serve and encourage excellence in poetry written in English anywhere in the world. Eligible collections of poetry, which includes translations, must be submitted by publishers in the calendar year of their publication.



CITATIONS AND BIOGRAPHIES

Book: *Eunoia*

Poet: **Christian Bök**

Publishers: Coach House Books

Citation: **Christian Bök** has made an immensely attractive work from those “corridors of the breath” we call vowels, giving each in turn its dignity and manifest, making all move to the order of his own recognition and narrative. Both he and they are led to delightfully, unexpected conclusions as though the world really were what we made of it. As we are told at the outset, “Eunoia, which means ‘beautiful thinking’, is the shortest English word to contain all five vowels.” Here each speaks with persistent, unequivocal voice, all puns indeed intended.

Christian Bök’s *Eunoia* is a phenomenal success story by Canadian standards. Since its publication in 2001, it’s had seven reprints and 6,000 copies. He is the author of the acclaimed *Crystallography* (Coach House Press, 1994), a pataphysical encyclopedia nominated for the Gerald Lampert Award for Best Poetic Debut. *Pataphysics: The Poetics of an Imaginary Science* is forthcoming from Northwestern University Press. Bök’s conceptual artwork has appeared at the Marianne Boesky Gallery in New York City as part of the *Poetry Plastique* exhibit. He has also created artificial languages for the TV shows, Gene Roddenberry’s *Earth: Final Conflict* and *Peter Benchley’s Amazon*. Bök has also earned many accolades for his virtuoso performances of sound poetry (particularly the *Ursonate* by Kurt Schwitters).

Book: *Disobedience*

Poet: **Alice Notley**

Publisher: Penguin Putnam Inc. (U.S.), Penguin Books Ltd. (U.K.), Penguin Books Australia Ltd., Penguin Books Canada Ltd., and Penguin Books (N.Z.) Ltd.

Citation: *Disobedience* stands in ambush at the virtual co-ordinates of our ‘post-modern’ inferno. Against ‘decorous poetry’, Alice Notley’s verse has a caustic swish, the intimacy of a vivisectionist on the contemporary body politic. In an unsentimental interrogation of the will, the soul and the common being the long poem ‘disses’ the orthodoxies of political power, sex, and philosophy. *Disobedience* does what only the best poetry can do in times like these, surprise, denounce, dissent.

Alice Notley is the author of more than 20 books of poetry including *The Descent of Alette* (1996) and *Mysteries of Small Houses* (Penguin, 1998). She was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, and winner of the Los Angeles Times Book Award for Poetry. In the spring of 2001 she received an Academy Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Poetry Society of America’s Shelly Memorial Award. She edited and wrote a new introduction to her late husband Ted Berrigan’s *The Sonnets* (Penguin, 2000). Born in Bisbee, Arizona, Notley grew up in Needles, California. After leading a peripatetic life during the late 60s and early 70s, she settled in New York, where, for 16 years, she was an important force in the eclectic second generation of the so-called New York school of poetry. She currently lives in Paris, France.

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