



Author Jessica Grant (right) receives a hug from fellow nominee and author Lisa Moore after Grant was named the winner of the 10th annual Winterset Award at Government House Thursday afternoon. Moore and author Michael Crummey were the two runners-up. — Photo by Keith Gosse/The Telegram

LITERATURE

Tortoise wins Winterset race

BY MALLORY CLARKSON
SPECIAL TO THE TELEGRAM

The moments leading up to the announcement of Winterset Awards' 10th winner were filled with emotion. The three finalists sat on the edges of their seats waiting for a name to be called.

Jessica Grant said it came as a surprise when she was announced as the winner of the award for her first novel, "Come, Thou Tortoise."

"I know people always say this, but I really didn't expect it. If you had told me before that I'd be nominated for this award, I wouldn't have believed it," she said through tears during her acceptance speech.

The Winterset Award celebrates

Newfoundland and Labrador writing and first place comes with \$5,000. The two runners-up — Michael Crummey with "Galore" and Lisa Moore with "February" — received \$1,000 each.

The jury — made up of vice-principal Yvonne Pevie, artist and writer Peter Pickersgill and poet and playwright Des Walsh — made its selection from 32 books written by Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. All entries had to be published in 2009 to be considered for this award.

Although this is something Grant said she's always dreamed would happen, she said it wasn't just about the award to her — it was the first time she felt like a Newfoundlander.

"It's just the best feeling. All of a sudden it felt like I belonged to this place and it belonged to me in a way that it hadn't before," she said.

Grant describes the 2 1/2 years of solid writing it took to write "Come, Thou Tortoise" as a long time in the making.

The award is administered by the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council and was established in 2000 by Richard Gwyn in honour of his late wife, Sandra Fraser Gwyn.

Gwyn said the finalists are proof Newfoundland and Labrador is the most creative part of the country.

"The pool of talent just keeps growing. Jessica Grant is a wonderful example of this," he said.

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