

Megan Gail Coles wins the 2014 BMO Winterset Award

March 26, 2015 (St. John's, NL) – Megan Gail Coles is the winner of the 2014 BMO Winterset Award for her book *Eating Habits of the Chronically Lonesome*. The award, which celebrates excellence in Newfoundland and Labrador writing, was presented today at a ceremony at Government House in St. John's.

The two other finalists were Michael Crummey for *Sweetland* (Doubleday Canada, Toronto, ON) and Alan Doyle for *Where I Belong* (Doubleday Canada, Toronto, ON).

The BMO Winterset Award is composed of a partnership between the BMO Financial Group and those involved from the start - the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council and the project's founder, writer Richard Gwyn, OC. The prize awarded to the annual winner is \$10,000, while the finalists each receive \$2,500. It is one of Atlantic Canada's richest literary prizes.

Eating Habits of the Chronically Lonesome (Killick Press, St. John's, NL) was one of 26 works by Newfoundland and Labrador authors (either native-born or resident) that were submitted by publishers from across the country. Books in any genre, published in 2014 were eligible. The jury consisted of Mark Callanan, John Crosbie, and Marie Wadden.

The BMO Winterset Award honours the memory of Sandra Fraser Gwyn, St. John's-born social historian, prize-winning author, who did so much to promote a national awareness of the arts of this province. Her husband, journalist and author Richard Gwyn, OC, established the award in 2000. It is named after the historic house on Winter Avenue in St. John's where Sandra grew up.

Megan Gail Coles is a graduate of Memorial University of Newfoundland and the National Theatre School of Canada. She is co-founder and co-artistic director of Poverty Cove Theatre Company. Megan is currently working on a trilogy of plays examining resource exploitation in Newfoundland and Labrador titled *The Driftwood Trilogy: Falling Trees, Building Houses, and Wasting Paper*. She is a member of the Writers' Alliance of Newfoundland and Labrador, Playwrights Guild of Canada, Playwrights' Atlantic Resource Centre (NL Rep) and Playwrights' Workshop Montreal. Her completed plays include *Our Eliza* and *The Battery and Bound*. She won the 2013 Rhonda Payne Theatre Award that acknowledges emerging talents of women in theatre. Megan is originally from Savage Cove on the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland. She currently resides in St. John's where she works at Breakwater Books Ltd. *Eating Habits of the Chronically Lonesome* is Megan's first fiction publication.

The BMO Winterset Award is managed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council (NLAC).

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The NLAC is a non-profit Crown agency created in 1980 by The Arts Council Act. Its mission is to foster and promote the creation and enjoyment of the arts for the benefit of all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The Council is governed by a volunteer board of 13 appointed by government, reflecting regional representation of the province. This includes 10 professional artists who provide sectoral representation of the arts community; one community representative (with an interest in the arts); one business representative (with an interest in the arts); and one representative of the Department of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development (non-voting). The NLAC receives an annual contribution of \$2.1 million from the Province to support a variety of granting programs, program delivery, office administration, and communications. It also seeks support from the public and private sector. It supports the following artistic disciplines: dance, film, multidiscipline, music, theatre, visual art, and writing.