

Don McKay wins the 2011 BMO Winterset Award

March 22, 2012, St. John's, NL – Don McKay is the winner of the 2011 BMO Winterset Award for his book *The Shell of the Tortoise*. 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 Edward Riche for *Easy to Like* (Anansi Press, Toronto, ON) and Mark Callanan for *Gift Horse* (Véhicule Press, Montréal, PQ).

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 Atlantic Canada's richest literary prize and one of the richest regional awards in Canada.

The Shell of the Tortoise, (Gaspereau Press, Printers & Publishers, Kentville, NS) was one of 39 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 2011 were eligible. The jury consisted of Noreen Golfman, Kevin Major, and Lisa Moore.

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.

Don McKay is a poet, teacher and editor. He has published about a dozen books in a career that spans four decades. He has twice won the Governor General's Literary Awards for poetry and the Griffin Poetry Prize for *Strike/Slip* in 2007. His previous essay collections include the GG-shortlisted *Vis à Vis: Field Notes on Poetry & Wilderness* and *Deactivated West 100*. McKay lives in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

The BMO Winterset Award is administered 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 Tourism, Culture and Recreation (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.