



Heather Smith wins the 2018 BMO Winterset Award

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 28, 2019 (St. John's, NL) – Heather Smith is the winner of the 2018 BMO Winterset Award for her book *Ebb & Flow*. 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 Melissa Barbeau for *The Luminous Sea* (Breakwater Books, St. John's, NL) and Robert Chafe for *Between Breaths* (Playwrights Canada Press, Toronto, ON).

The BMO Winterset Award is composed of a partnership between the BMO Financial Group and those involved from the start - ArtsNL and the project's founder, writer Richard Gwyn, OC. The prize awarded to the annual winner is \$12,500, while the finalists each receive \$3,000. It is one of Atlantic Canada's richest literary prizes.

Ebb & Flow (Kids Can Press Ltd.; division of Corus Entertainment Inc., Toronto, ON) was one of 30 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 2018 were eligible. The jury consisted of Catherine Hogan Safer, Joel Thomas Hynes, and Virginia Triefoff.

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.

Heather Smith is originally from Newfoundland and Labrador, but now lives in Waterloo, Ontario with her husband and three children. Heather is the author of two young adult books, *Baygirl* (Orca Book Publishers) and *The Agony of Bun O'Keefe* (Penguin Random House Canada), and a children's book called *Angus All Aglow* (Orca Book Publishers). She has a second children's book called *A Plan for Pops* (Orca Book Publishers) just released, in February 2019. Her east coast roots inspire much of her writing. Her novel, *The Agony of Bun O'Keefe*, received a starred review from *Quill & Quire* as well as also being named a best book of 2017 by *Kirkus*, Bank Street College of Education, *The Globe & Mail*, and *Quill & Quire* (honorable mention). The title was also selected as an Outstanding International Book by USBBY (United States Board on Books for Young People). Heather's BMO Winterset Award winning title, *Ebb & Flow*, tells a story about Jett who returns to the coast for a summer with Grandma Jo after a bad year in a new town at a new school, told in free verse.

The BMO Winterset Award is managed by ArtsNL.

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ArtsNL 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, Industry and Innovation (non-voting). ArtsNL receives an annual allocation of \$1.9 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.

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