The 2020 Shortlists for the Canadian Children’s Book Centre Book Awards Celebrate the Best in Canadian Books for Young People

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Toronto (September 15, 2020) —The Canadian Children’s Book Centre (CCBC) is excited to announce the finalists for the following eight major awards celebrating Canadian books for young people:

- TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award ($50,000)
- Prix TD de littérature canadienne pour l’enfance et la jeunesse ($50,000)
- Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award ($20,000)
- Norma Fleck Award for Canadian Children’s Non-Fiction ($10,000)
- Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction for Young People ($5,000)
- John Spray Mystery Award ($5,000)
- Amy Mathers Teen Book Award ($5,000)
- Prix Harry Black de l’album jeunesse ($5,000)

The nominated titles represent the exceptional quality of the work by Canadian authors and illustrators from across the country. Every single title nominated has made a valuable contribution to Canadian children’s literature in a year where an escape into a book has been a welcome refuge for many.

"As always, we are proud to present this year's shortlists for our eight children's book awards," says Rose Vespa, Executive Director of the Canadian Children's Book Centre. "This was an especially good year for historical fiction and picture books, with both the Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction for Young People and the Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award featuring shortlists of six instead of the usual five, a testament to the strength of the titles. We are especially proud of this year’s shortlists featuring books by more diverse creators than ever before. In a year fraught with uncertainty, many of the nominated books focus on family and our relationships with others, which serves as a reminder of what is really important. We are incredibly grateful to all of our sponsors for making each award possible and elevating the importance of books for young people."

"Congratulations to this year's finalists of the TD Canadian Children's Literature Award," states Andrea Barrack, Global Head, Sustainability and Corporate Citizenship, TD Bank Group. "In a time of incredible ambiguity, your passion and talents are helping provide stability and education for young readers from coast to coast. That's why supporting early learning and children's literature is a key component of the TD Ready Commitment, the Bank's global corporate citizenship platform. Every book opened and page turned help young readers develop literacy skills critical for continued success, especially when schooling may look different this year.”
For the first time, the CCBC is partnering with the Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) on a pilot project to provide accessible formats of all books nominated for the Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award, Amy Mathers Teen Book Award, TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award and the Prix TD de littérature canadienne pour l’enfance et la jeunesse. “We are thrilled to be working with the Canadian Children’s Book Centre to make award-winning Canadian stories available in accessible formats for children with print disabilities,” says Rina Hadziev, Executive Director for the Centre for Equitable Library Access. “We know how important it is to give all kids access to more stories that reflect their experiences and inspire their imaginations. The CCBC does such important work promoting Canadian authors and illustrators and we are honoured to work alongside them.”

The winners of the English-language awards will be announced at a small, socially distanced event, co-hosted by the Toronto International Festival of Authors (TIFA) as part of its new TIFA Kids! programming. A live stream of the event will be free for all, with the ceremony available on our YouTube channel, Bibliovideo, afterwards. Leading up to the event, the CCBC and TIFA will host panel discussions with some of the nominated creators. These “virtual school trips” will be free for all to attend. “The Toronto International Festival of Authors is delighted to partner with the Canadian Children’s Book Centre to bring the Festival’s new TIFA Kids! weekend to life with literary adventures for the whole family,” says Roland Gulliver, Director of the Toronto International Festival of Authors. “Connecting readers and writers of all ages with extraordinary authors and illustrators is at the heart of what we do, and the CCBC Award shortlist does not disappoint.” More event information will be available at festivalofauthors.ca on September 22.

The French-language awards will be celebrated as a part of Salon du livre Montreal, hosted by Communication-Jeunesse, our sister organization in Quebec. A virtual event will be held in mid-November, where the winners of both the Prix TD and the Prix Harry Black will be announced. This event will be a part of the annual book festival, helping to further elevate the Prix TD and Prix Harry Black awards.

Overall, $175,000 in prize monies will be awarded. The Canadian Children’s Book Centre is proud to share the nominated titles and the juries’ notes. The finalists for each award are listed below.

View the online version of this press release here.

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**TD Canadian Children’s Literature Award ($50,000)**
*Sponsored by TD Bank Group*

**Birdsong**
Written and illustrated by Julie Flett *(Vancouver, BC)*
Greystone Kids
for ages 3-8

“This gentle and affecting story is a tender tribute to the healing power of friendship, art and nature... Offering beautiful illustrations that are both calming and expressive, in addition to thoughtful, quiet and tender text, this book demonstrates the value of intergenerational friendships and of caring for others. Flett integrates the Cree worldview seamlessly... Young and old will enjoy sharing this touching story together.”

**Broken Strings**
Written by Eric Walters *(Guelph, ON)* and Kathy Kacer *(Toronto, ON)*
Puffin Canada
for ages 10-14

“Through the collaborative efforts of Walters and Kacer we are given a heartfelt and meaningful story that focuses on intergenerational relationships, the power of music and the importance of history... Set against the backdrop of a high school production of Fiddler on the Roof, it provides a heartbreaking look at the Holocaust while also portraying complex family relationships, a realistic depiction of middle school dynamics and the power of music to hurt and to heal... Broken Strings is a moving and complex story that will serve to not only entertain, but also enlighten the reader.”

**It Began With a Page: How Gyo Fujikawa Drew the Way**
Written by Kyo Maclear *(Toronto, ON)*
Illustrated by Julie Morstad *(Vancouver, BC)*
Tundra Books
for ages 5-9

“This is a magnificent picture book biography that sensitively and astutely portrays the life story of Gyo Fujikawa: the events that shaped her as an artist and as a person... Maclear is a master at creating text that tells us exactly what we need to know while leaving room for Morstad’s stunning illustrations that add detail and dimension to the story... The book is empowering in demonstrating how Gyo was a leader in her time, creating beautiful, diverse works of art to create a better, more inclusive world for us all.”

**Small in the City**
Written and illustrated by Sydney Smith *(Halifax, NS)*
Groundwood Books
for ages 4-7

“Heartbreaking and haunting, yet hopeful. These are only a few of the emotions evoked when reading Sydney Smith’s Small in the City... With very sparse text, the reader relies on the illustrations to add detail to the story and Smith has done this to perfection... Simply told and
exquisitely illustrated, it is open-ended and resonates differently with each reader but leaves a lasting impression on all.”

Stand on the Sky
Written by Erin Bow (Kitchener, ON)
Scholastic Canada
for ages 9-12
“In poetic, elegantly-crafted prose that vividly depicts the Mongolian desert setting, Erin Bow has created a powerful story of family and finding one’s place in the world... Bow adeptly shapes her characters, so we ache for them and cheer them on... Both interesting and informative, Stand on the Sky is a memorable story that stays with the reader long after the last page has been read.”

JURY MEMBERS: Lisa Doucet, Co-Manager, Woozles; Sandra O’Brien, former Editor, Canadian Children’s Book News, and former teacher; Colette Poitras, Manager, Indigenous Public Library Outreach, Government of Alberta

Prix TD de littérature canadienne pour l’enfance et la jeunesse ($50,000)
Sponsored by TD Bank Group

Les étoiles
Written and illustrated by Jacques Goldstyn (Mount Royal, QC)
Éditions de la Pastèque
for ages 8 and up
“In this beautiful homage to childhood, Goldstyn explores the importance of recognizing and accepting the differences of others. Filled with subtle literary references, Les étoiles makes us laugh, touches our hearts and make us reflect all at the same time... This book delivers a universal message that is timely and relevant: love knows no barriers, whether religious, cultural or social. With his own unique style, Goldstyn tells us a sweet and hopeful story with delicacy and finesse.”

Le grain de sable : Olivier Le Jeune, premier esclave au Canada
Written by Webster (Montreal, QC)
Illustrated by ValMo (Montreal, QC)
Éditions Septentrion
for ages 8 and up
“Few books delve into the history of Afro-descendants in Quebec. This docudrama brilliantly plunges us into the little-known reality of slavery in Quebec and in Canada... The book presents a story of upheaval and heartbreak, but also shows us hope for a better world. Somewhere between a picture book, a documentary and a novel, this book is about the need to remember, especially that which has been forgotten. Webster’s poetic style and metaphorical writing skilfully blend with the magnificent illustrations of ValMo, whose full watercolour-like pages lend themselves equally well to images of the ocean as to the Canadian wilderness.”
Mon ami Pierrot
Written by Annie Gravel (Sainte-Béatrix, QC)
Illustrated by Enzo (Montreal, QC)
Éditions Planète rebelle
for ages 6 and up
“In her debut picture book, Gravel delivers a tale full of affection, where illness meets the fanciful and where friendship and resilience soften the mourning of a loved one... Gravel uses a fence throughout the story as a magnificent metaphor, both of a barrier to our imagination, but also of a boundary defining life and death... The accompanying audio version enhances the musicality of the language used... With this story, Gravel has created characters capable of carving a path to the hearts of readers young and old.”

Pipo
Written by Amélie Dumoulin (Montreal, QC)
Illustrated by Todd Stewart (Montreal, QC)
Éditions Québec Amérique
for ages 11 and up
“In Pipo, Dumoulin offers us a fairy tale novel that addresses, among other things, the themes of friendship, loneliness and the pursuit of dreams. Through her naive eyes, little Pipo, a sort of modern-day Pippi Longstocking, makes us see the world differently... Accompanied by illustrations with an old-fashioned charm by Todd Stewart, this novel offers a plethora of delicious puns and introduces fantastical elements that awaken the artist in all of us. Pipo is a real gem to be ranked alongside the classics of the genre.”

Quand le vent souffle
Written and illustrated by Todd Stewart (Montreal, QC)
Translated by Nadine Robert (Montreal, QC)
Comme des géants
for ages 5 and up
“Todd Stewart presents an enticing picture book in which an old tree discusses with a younger one the good and bad sides of the wind, the passing of time, the trials that we overcome and that sometimes weaken us... A picture book that addresses the cycle of the seasons, but also life, it praises the importance of the transmission of knowledge between generations. The text, although succinct, is effective and imbued with poetry. The superb large-format silkscreen prints, reminiscent of certain works of the Group of Seven, are full of detail. This is a magnificent picture book that highlights the natural world through the richness of its colourful palette.”

JURY MEMBERS: Mathieu Arès, literary critic; Marika Brouillette-Drapeau, bookseller; Marie-Ève Guibord, children’s librarian.
Marilyn Baillie Picture Book Award ($20,000)
Sponsored by A. Charles Baillie

Birdsong
Written and illustrated by Julie Flett (Vancouver, BC)
Greystone Kids
for ages 3-8
“Breathtaking yet subtle illustrations that capture the Canadian landscape help set the scene for this wonderful book that focuses on a beautiful and authentic intergenerational relationship... The reader is transported into the narrator’s love for the natural world... The author uses the distinct Canadian seasons to mirror the passage of time with the strong bond that develops between the characters. Readers are engaged from the glossary of Cree-Métis vocabulary at the onset of the book to the touching tribute at the conclusion of the book.”

King Mouse
Written by Cary Fagan (Toronto, ON)
Illustrated by Dena Seiferling (Calgary, AB)
Tundra Books
for ages 4-7
“This quiet little book with a powerful message offers a perfect blend of tenderly crafted text and sublime artwork. Not a word out of place. The monochromatic illustrations and the spare text draw readers into a magical realm, just off the garden path, where a mouse, a bear and assorted friends learn an important lesson that resonates with young and old alike. A gem destined to become a classic.”

My Winter City
Written by James Gladstone (Toronto, ON)
Illustrated by Gary Clement (Toronto, ON)
Groundwood Books
for ages 4-7
“Set in a snowy and chilly urban surrounding, this winter tale generates an abundance of warmth through the parent/child relationship and the beautiful landmarks of this urban city... Gary Clement successfully transports the reader into a day in the life of a parent and a child, with their dog — of course, enjoying their ideal winter day... This simple story becomes a multi-layered, sensory journey that readers are happy to tag along on.”

The Phone Booth in Mr. Hirota’s Garden
Written by Heather Smith (Waterloo, ON)
Illustrated by Rachel Wada (Vancouver, BC)
Orca Book Publishers
for ages 6-8
“A tragic tale gently told through simple text and expressive artwork... Inspired by a true story, we learn of the power of grieving and healing when a means is provided for those suffering a loss... The somber illustrations of this dark colour palette represent the loss and the healing that
the whole village feels… The magnitude of the phone booth is cautiously revealed to the villagers, and the reader, as a ritual of healing and moving forward after trauma.”

**Small in the City**  
Written by Sydney Smith  
(Halifax, NS)  
Groundwood Books  
for ages 4-7  
“A subtle transition from a wordless story to a beautifully written piece of poetry that follows the journey of this child through this city… Wonderfully written in the first person, the reader is taken along on a bleak winter journey across a snowy city… The noise, hustle and bustle of people, the massive skyscrapers, and the snowstorm all envelope the child on their trek to find someone, or something, that they have lost.”

**When I Found Grandma**  
Written by Saumiya Balasubramaniam  
(Toronto, ON)  
Illustrated by Qin Leng  
(Toronto, ON)  
Groundwood Books  
for ages 4-7  
“A tender and touching story of how a little girl and her grandmother – seemingly worlds apart – come to understand and "find" each other across cultures and generations… We watch the young Maya develop a deep love for her grandmother as she comes to truly understand all the beauty she carries in what she first sees as “different”… The delightful illustrations depict how the young granddaughter eventually appreciates and admires her grandma’s quirks and mannerisms.”

**JURY MEMBERS:** Jim Martella, principal, Toronto District School Board, and former teacher-librarian and literacy coach; Janis Nostbakken, children’s media specialist; Sara Spencer, PYP teacher-librarian.

**Norma Fleck Award for Canadian Children’s Non-Fiction ($10,000)**  
Sponsored by the Fleck Family Foundation

**Beastly Puzzles: A Brain-Boggling Animal Guessing Game**  
Written by Rachel Poliquin  
(Vancouver, BC)  
Illustrated by Byron Eggenschwiler  
(Calgary, AB)  
Kids Can Press  
for ages 9-12  
“Beautifully illustrated and filled with interesting facts, this book engages not only the creative and playful brain but the scientific one as well… The lift-the-flap pages, the guessing game premise and the intriguing bits of information provided in each spread help to make Beastly Puzzles a beastly delight!”
**Cells: An Owner’s Handbook**
Written and illustrated by Carolyn Fisher (Calgary, AB)
Beach Lane Books
for ages 3-8
“This book is a succinct, informative, engaging, thoughtful creation that answers and invites questions about the body... A well thought out introduction to the world of biology... An ideal specimen of non-fiction text for the 21st-century learner. As fun to look at as it is to read!”

**Fairy Science**
(Fairy Science, Book 1)
Written and illustrated by Ashley Spires (Delta, BC)
Tundra Books
for ages 3-7
“A perfect example of how information is woven into a fictional narrative... A delightful heroine who believes in hypothesis, observation and experiments, Esther is a great role model for fairies and humans alike... Filled with fun facts, the reader learns both the serious and silly side to science and how it really exists all around us... Ashley Spires inSPIRES.”

**Killer Style: How Fashion Has Injured, Maimed, & Murdered Through History**
Written by Serah-Marie McMahon (Toronto, ON) and Alison Matthews David (Toronto, ON)
Illustrated by Gillian Wilson (Guelph, ON)
Owlkids Books
for ages 9-12
“Brilliant layout of illustrations and photographs, captivating headings and ‘just enough’ information about such things as constricting corsets, restrictive skirts, and fatal footwear fiascos help to make this a macabre, entertaining and stylish creation... A unique book about a unique historical topic. Easy and fun layout filled with juicy tidbits and stories, this book will draw in lovers of fashion and disaster alike.”

**Picking Up the Pieces: Residential School Memories and the Making of the Witness Blanket**
Written by Carey Newman (Victoria, BC) and Kirstie Hudson (Victoria, BC)
Orca Book Publishers
for ages 12 and up
“A book for bookshelves everywhere, this thoughtful and beautiful book takes a look at the dark history of residential schools through the making of the Witness Blanket... The book itself is a rich artefact to treasure the memories, narratives and images of the Witness Blanket... Artist Carey Newman takes the reader on his journey from the first idea to completion.”

**JURY MEMBERS:** Nancy Cooper, First Nations Consultant, Southern Ontario Library Service; Erin Grittani, Children’s Consultant, Another Story Bookshop; Larry Swartz, Instructor, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, and author of *Teaching Tough Topics: How Do I Use Children’s Literature to Build a Deeper Understanding of Social Justice, Equity, and Diversity?* (Pembroke Publishers)
Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction for Young People ($5,000)
Sponsored by the Canadian Children’s Book Centre’s Bilson Endowment Fund

Among the Fallen
Written by Virginia Frances Schwartz (Flushing, NY)
Holiday House
for ages 14 and up
“A well-crafted and compelling story of young women working and surviving (mostly) in the workhouses and asylums of Victorian England’s penal system... The planting of seeds of doubt in the reader and the final reveal offers hope as Orpha claims her own story at the end of the novel and culminates her journey from “fallen” girl to a young woman taking control of her own life and circumstances. The short chapters, interspersed with letters and interviews, make it accessible for younger readers while the strong female friendships and hopeful and open ending make it an excellent text for young adults.”

Be My Love
Written by Kit Pearson (Victoria, BC)
HarperTrophy Canada
for ages 10-14
“Kit Pearson develops splendid characters and situations that clearly draw on memory, but resonate with the concerns of today's youth. This one is particularly introspective, focused on the developing sexual awakening of a young girl, and how she comes to understand her love for another teen, her cousin, who clearly has different feelings, experiences and aspirations. Pearson’s details of island life on the sunshine coast reverberate through the writing. This is a story of courage offering a glimpse at a time where the subject matter was taboo but recognizes that LGBTQ issues are not anything new.”

The Big Dig
Written by Lisa Harrington (Halifax, NS)
Nimbus Publishing
for ages 12 and up
“A heartfelt summer vacation novel of growing up and discovering your family. Deeply evocative of the late 1970s in Atlantic Canada with lots of details, quirky characters, awkward situations and moving emotional discoveries... Heartbreakingly lovely with just the right amount of drama mixed with humour. It portrays honest human emotion without a lot of unnecessary conflict.”

City on Strike
Written by Harriet Zaidman (Winnipeg, MB)
Red Deer Press
for ages 10 and up
“City on Strike documents the Winnipeg general strike in 1919 from the perspective of a Jewish family with strong details and intensely rich characters, both real and imagined. Zaidman’s depiction of Winnipeg is comprehensive and clear. The racism and conflict between English Canadians and newcomers are palpable and relevant to our current period. The story builds
slowly, but once the action gets going you do not want to set it down. The comprehensive bibliography and additional end material expand and humanize the story and invites further contemplation and exploration of the strike.”

**Orange for the Sunsets**
Written by Tina Athaide (Temecula, CA)
Katherine Tegen Books
for ages 8-12
“The expulsion of Indians from Idi Amin’s Uganda is the time and setting for this tale of race, friendship, nationalism and empathy. The well-developed characters, Asha and Yesofu, must decide what will happen to their friendship in a time and place torn by ethnic nationalism. The alternating narration, rich description, use of language and vocabulary make this difficult and disturbing tension and conflict accessible to young readers in Canada. The inclusion of photographs, bibliography and resources for additional interest offer further clarification and background... A powerful, thought-provoking and moving text.”

**Room for One More**
Written by Monique Polak (Montreal, QC)
Kar-Ben Publishing
for ages 9-14
“The story of an escaped Jewish teen’s integration with a family in 1940s Montreal is brought to life with realistic language and situations, scenes of sibling rivalry and anti-Semitism that ring true. This was a solid historical story that integrates important historical events and situations... The characters are rich and believable... Polak’s juxtaposition of the rich English in Westmount with the working-class French is indicative of the tensions and relations in that area of Montreal both at that time and today.

**JURY MEMBERS:** Shaula Corr, former middle school librarian; Matt McCarney, teacher (Grade 7/8 English and History), Selwyn House School, and PhD student, Integrated Studies in Education, McGill University; Dr. Eric M. Meyers, Associate Professor, School of Information, University of British Columbia; Gail de Vos (chair), author, storyteller and Adjunct (Associate) Professor, School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alberta.

**John Spray Mystery Award ($5,000)**
Sponsored by John Spray

**The Athena Protocol**
Written by Shamim Sarif (London, UK)
HarperTeen
for ages 14 and up
“This action-packed story features a diverse group of female vigilantes and raises many questions of ethics and social justice around human rights, especially women’s rights... With extraordinarily fierce female characters, diverse in their skills and spirit, Sarif has created a thriller with a powerful and complex plot... Readers will enjoy this new take on a spy thriller and
will find the writing taut and engrossing.”

**Keep This to Yourself**  
Written by Tom Ryan (Ottawa, ON/Cape Breton Island, NS)  
Albert Whitman & Company  
for ages 13 and up  
“In this complex young adult story, rife with subplots of changing friendships, new relationships, grief, guilt and more, Ryan presents a fast-paced narrative, pulling the reader from one suspicion to another, fuelled by a slew of red herrings, before revealing that we don’t always know those closest to us... The characters are well-drawn and authentic, the writing is flawless and the plot moves at a perfect pace.”

**The Mystery of Black Hollow Lane**  
(Order of Black Hollow Lane, Book 1)  
Written by Julia Nobel (Brentwood Bay, BC)  
Sourcebooks Jabberwocky  
for ages 8-11  
“This classic boarding school mystery blends an atmospheric setting with a plethora of characters, both young people and adults, in a thrilling plot in which the kids face their run-of-the-mill school bullies as well as a shadowy group... This fast-paced mystery will keep readers guessing.”

**Songs from the Deep**  
Written by Kelly Powell (Burlington, ON)  
Margaret K. McElderry Books  
for ages 12 and up  
“This haunting murder mystery features sirens and a strong-willed heroine who is determined to find the truth... Perfect for older middle-grade and YA readers, Powell creates a world of another time and place... Songs from the Deep melds mystery with fantasy and historical fiction and creates an evocative story of community and responsibility with a touch of evil.”

**The Starlight Claim**  
Written by Tim Wynne-Jones (Perth, ON)  
Candlewick Press  
for ages 14 and up  
“Wynne-Jones balances a story of survival in a remote northern Ontario winter setting with a cat-and-mouse game between a teen and some ruthless criminals... The northern setting seems to also be a character, simultaneously providing danger and safety. Jam-packed with action and tension... Wynne-Jones’ book expertly blends adventure, family secrets and the Canadian wilderness in this excellent read for youth.”

**JURY MEMBERS:** Diana Krawczyk, Manager, Children, Youth and Popular Collections, Central Library, Mississauga Library; Helen Kubiw, writer, retired teacher-librarian and blogger at CanLit for LittleCanadians; Maria Martella, owner of Tinlids Inc., a wholesaler of children's and teen
books for schools and libraries.

**Amy Mathers Teen Book Award ($5,000)**  
*Sponsored by the Canadian Children’s Book Centre*

**All Our Broken Pieces**  
Written by L.D. Crichton (Calgary, AB)  
Hyperion  
for ages 14 and up  
“*Beautifully written and engrossing, Crichton’s All Our Broken Pieces captivates with raw emotion and a reverential love story... Brilliantly threaded through the heart of this narrative is how the searing pain of physical deformity and mental health struggles are made bearable by the capacious souls of teenagers committed to helping one another face the world.*”

**The Candle and the Flame**  
Written by Nafiza Azad (Delta, BC)  
Scholastic Press  
for ages 12 and up  
“*Nafiza Azad weaves her readers into a richly-textured fantasy...about a girl who must straddle two worlds, human and djinn... Azad’s writing is so descriptive, so lush that you can feel the desert heat, hear the lively music, and taste the succulent dishes cooking around every corner in the city of Noor... Azad’s ability to conjure a landscape as fascinating and intricate as the lives she explores is remarkable.*”

**In the Key of Nira Ghani**  
Written by Natasha Deen (Edmonton, AB)  
Running Press Teens  
for ages 12 and up  
“*Natasha Deen invites readers into the warm embrace of the community she so charmingly depicts in In the Key of Nira Ghani... In this contemporary coming-of-age story, Deen shines a light on the struggles of conforming to your parents’ expectations while trying to forge your own path... Poignant and full of love, this is a story of family, friendship, and finding the courage to make your voice heard. A heart-warming story that will steal your heart.*”

**Keep This to Yourself**  
Written by Tom Ryan (Ottawa, ON/Cape Breton Island, NS)  
Albert Whitman & Company  
for ages 13 and up  
“*Tragedy and dark secrets haunt the picturesque seaside town of Camera Cove in this tightly wound mystery... Thrilling and fast-paced, Keep This to Yourself is a keep-you-guessing-to-the-end mystery that will both excite and surprise readers... Ryan is an accomplished storyteller, whose ability to enthral with plot never loses sight of the human drama that elevates it and gives it a beating heart.*”
Love from A to Z
Written by S.K. Ali (Toronto, ON)
Salaam Reads
for ages 14 and up
“Tackling Islamophobia, grief and loss, faith and family, S.K. Ali has crafted a bighearted love story and, in Adam and Zayned, characters that shine with honesty and insecurity... The portraits that emerge of the individuals themselves and of the couple are honest and raw, exploring the pain of racism and of devastating medical diagnoses, against a background of love and the resiliency it offers those who find it... Ali masterfully tells this story of faith, trust and belonging that satisfies the romantic in all of us.”

JURY MEMBERS: Kathleen Martin, writer, editor and Past President, Writers’ Federation of Nova Scotia; Tracey Schindler, reviewer and former teacher; Joel A. Sutherland, Silver Birch Award-winning author and Manager of Client Experience, Pickering Public Library.

Prix Harry Black de l’album jeunesse ($5,000)
Sponsored by Mary Macchiusi

La case 144
Written by Nadine Poirier (Trois-Rivières, QC)
Illustrated by Geneviève Després (St-Lambert, QC)
Éditions D’eux
for ages 5 and up
“Poirier’s picture book stands out by tackling the theme of homelessness with tenderness and without naming it outright. It is through the naïve perspective of a child, who explores her city while playing hopscotch to avoid getting lost, that this touching story unfolds. Etched into this text is sensitivity, poetry and humanity, which invite an open-mindedness towards others as well as an acceptance of the differences between us. The creative layered pages that portray the mind of a child establish a parallel between the homeless man and the genie in a tale from One Thousand and One Nights. Després’ illustrations consist of luminous colours which create warmth throughout the text. A wonderful picture book that offers an unforgettable reading experience.”

La corde à linge
Written and illustrated by Orbie (Cap d’Espoir, QC)
Éditions les 400 coups
for ages 5 and up
“Five-year-old Réal enjoys helping his mother with chores, in exchange for pocket money to buy candy at the corner store beneath his apartment. He especially enjoys running quickly down the stairs and finds immense pleasure pulling on the clothesline as he passes and hearing the squeaky noise it makes... With irresistible humour and concise text, over time, the illustrations reveal each emotional rollercoaster. An enduring little protagonist, Réal must manage on his own and gains, the hard way, independence, resilience and courage.”
Des couleurs sur la Grave
Written by Marie-Andrée Arsenault (Montreal, QC)
Illustrated by Dominique Leroux (L’Étang-du-Nord, QC)
Éditions la Morue verte
for ages 6 and up
“This poetic folktale takes an original approach to the theme of the parents’ separation, but from the point of view of the child... Arsenault’s poetic style invites the reader on a journey where childhood can be calm, but also have its share of rough patches... The visual universe of this unique piece of literature (illustrations, collages, photographs, mixed media) is of exceptional quality.”

Laurent, c'est moi !
Written by Stéphanie Deslauriers (Notre-Dame-de-l’Île-Perrot, QC)
Illustrated by Geneviève Després (St-Lambert, QC)
Éditions Fonfon
for ages 7 and up
“Deslauriers tackles the theme of autism, a subject rarely covered in children's literature, with great delicacy in this picture book... The text, sensitive and moving, reveals the specificities of a child in everyday life, in class and at home... Després brings this endearing character to life by illustrating him in colour as she plays with black and shades of grey for the other protagonists, an ingenious approach used to mark the boy's uniqueness... A book to read and reread, as our appreciation grows with each reading!”

Le poisson et l’oiseau
Written by Kim Thúy (Longueuil, QC)
Illustrated by Rogé (Montreal, QC)
Éditions de la Bagnole
for ages 3 and up
“An unlikely encounter between two dissimilar beings who recognize each other in spite of their differences... Thúy’s pithy language blends perfectly with Rogé's illustrations, which skilfully demonstrate the playful movements of this budding friendship, between air and water... From the dark and greyish palette at the beginning to the colours that gradually come to life on the page, each art style affirms their uniqueness in their relationship with the other: ‘Avec toi, je suis moi/la nuit le jour, pour toujours.’”

JURY MEMBERS: Raymond Bertin, cultural journalist; Sophie Kurler, librarian; Sophie Michaud, lecturer, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières.
About the Canadian Children’s Book Centre
The Canadian Children’s Book Centre is a national, not-for-profit organization founded in 1976. We are dedicated to encouraging, promoting and supporting the reading, writing and illustrating of Canadian books for young readers. Our programs, publications, and resources help teachers, librarians, booksellers and parents select the very best for young readers. For more information, please visit bookcentre.ca.

About Communication-Jeunesse
Communication-Jeunesse is a national non-profit cultural organization that was founded in 1971 to promote and appreciate Quebec and Franco-Canadian literature aimed at young people age 0 to 17. The vitality of the organization is largely based on the quality of its associative life and the commitment of its members has been at the heart of its operations since its creation. The members of Communication-Jeunesse enrich its actions and promote its development with as much rigor as energy. For more information, please visit communication-jeunesse.qc.ca.

About TD Global Corporate Citizenship
TD has a long-standing commitment to enriching the lives of its customers, colleagues and communities. As part of its corporate citizenship platform, The Ready Commitment, TD is targeting CDN $1 billion (US $775 million) in total by 2030 towards community giving in four areas critical to opening doors for a more inclusive and sustainable tomorrow – Financial Security, Vibrant Planet, Connected Communities and Better Health. Through The Ready Commitment, TD aspires to link its business, philanthropy and human capital to help people feel more confident — not just about their finances, but also in their ability to achieve their personal goals in a changing world. For further information, visit td.com/thereadycommitment.

About the Centre for Equitable Library Access
The Centre for Equitable Library Access (CELA) is Canada’s comprehensive accessible reading service, providing books and other materials to Canadians with print disabilities in the formats of their choice. A national not-for-profit organization, CELA is fully funded to serve 97% of the estimated 3 million Canadians with print disabilities in partnership with member public libraries and we offer a digital-only service to those in non-funded areas. CELA provides access to 800,000 professionally produced titles to provide people with print disabilities with a quality library experience. For more information, visit celalibrary.ca.

About the Toronto International Festival of Authors
The Toronto International Festival of Authors (TIFA) is Canada's longest-running literary festival, a charitable, non-for-profit cultural organization. It presents the finest of Canadian and international writers, artists and thinkers across the range of literary genres from fiction to non-fiction, poetry to plays, graphic novelists and illustrators. It enables audiences access and empowerment to meet, hear and learn from the finest contemporary writers and thinkers of our time. For more information, visit festivalofauthors.ca.
Salon du Livre de Montréal

Around a community of book lovers and future readers, the Salon's mission is to promote books and reading as cultural assets in Quebec society. The Salon du livre de Montréal values the essential role of authors, creators and professionals of the book industry. It also helps to promote the diversity of regional, national and international editorial productions. Finally, it mobilizes creators, professionals of the book industry and readers of Quebec while also generating creation, discussions and debate around the issues of our society. The values that are at the centre of our mission are sharing, diversity, inclusion and fun. For more information, visit salondulivredemontreal.com.