

Australian Poet Wins \$50,000 Montreal International Poetry Prize

(December 15, 2011 - Montreal) Mark Tredinnick, an Australian poet, has been awarded the \$50,000 Montreal International Poetry Prize for his poem, "Walking Underwater."

The winning poem was selected by former UK poet laureate Andrew Motion from a shortlist of nearly 50 poems. "This is a bold, big-thinking poem, in which ancient themes (especially the theme of our human relationship with landscape) are re-cast and re-kindled. It well deserves its eminence as a prize winner," said Motion. The poem has been published on the Montreal Prize website at www.montrealprize.com.

The nonprofit Montreal International Poetry Prize represents a new approach to major literary awards. It is the first major literary prize to be awarded "blind," meaning the author's identity is not revealed to the judge until after the winner has been selected. It is also based on a crowd-funding model, as it aims to be sustained directly by the community of poets who participate in the process by entering their work in the competition.

"Both our 'blind' judging process and our community-funding model represent a significant revolution in the field of major literary awards," says Montreal Prize co-founder, Len Epp, who holds a doctorate in English Literature from the University of Oxford. "Our project represents a challenge to the traditional hierarchies and conservative instincts that characterize much of the modern literary world."

The advisory board of the Montreal Prize reflects its global approach, and includes Jamaican-born poet Valerie Bloom, Scottish poet Don Paterson, Nigerian poet and novelist Ben Okri, Indian poet Jeet Thayil, and Australian poet John Kinsella, editor of *The Penguin Anthology of Australian Poetry*.

A second poem was selected from the shortlist by Eric Fischl, the renowned U.S. painter and sculptor, as the basis for a "broadside," or illustrated poem. Fischl's selection, "The Grasshoppers' Silence" by Canadian poet Linda Rogers, is inspired by the true story of Rumana Monzur, who was tragically blinded in an attack by her husband in Bangladesh in June. "I've chosen this poem because the image of the one-legged grasshopper won't let me sleep," said Fischl of his selection.

The 50 shortlisted poems, previously unpublished and chosen from 3,200 entries, will be published in a global poetry anthology. The poems were selected by a group of ten accomplished poets from Australia, Canada, Guyana, India, Ireland, Jamaica, Malawi, Nigeria, the U.K., and the U.S. According to Asa Boxer, a Montreal-based poet and another prize co-founder, "Our anthology may represent the first opportunity many readers have had to see a truly global collection of previously unpublished poetry."

All the poems that made the 2011 Montreal Prize longlist have been published in a separate e-anthology, available for free download at www.montrealprize.com. The 2011 Global Poetry Anthology will be published early in the new year. Both anthologies are being published under the Signal Editions imprint of Montreal's Véhicule Press.

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