



UNIVERSITY OF
KING'S
COLLEGE • HALIFAX

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM

Master of Fine Arts
in Creative Nonfiction



Penguin
Random House
Canada

April 24, 2019

King's announces shortlist for Penguin Random House Canada MFA Prize for best nonfiction writing

The shortlist for the first annual [Penguin Random House Canada MFA Prize](#) provides “a great snapshot of the quality and range of work our students produce,” said Kim Pittaway, executive director of the University of King’s College’s [Master of Fine Arts in Creative Nonfiction](#).

The five shortlisted projects include works of journalistic investigation, personal memoir, historical nonfiction and more.

The new prize, established by the generosity of Penguin Random House Canada in partnership with [Westwood Creative Artists](#) literary agency, celebrates excellence in creative nonfiction and is awarded for the best nonfiction book proposal prepared by a student in their graduating year, or by an alumnus. The proposal includes sample chapters and sections describing their book’s marketability.

The prize includes \$2,500 and a consultation with a Penguin Random House Canada Editor, as well as an offer by Westwood to represent the author.

“We were very impressed by these stories, each of which features a strong narrative voice and displays the writer’s sure grasp of how the material should be shaped,” noted Diane Turbide, publishing director of Penguin Canada, a division of Penguin Random House Canada. “While marketability is sometimes unpredictable, we are sure that these intriguing projects—each delving into the particular and universal—would delight readers.”

Added Hilary McMahon, executive vice president of Westwood Creative Artists: “The entries as a whole represented a fascinating range of interests and experiences that made for engrossing reading. The finely-honed proposals prove that the writers have learned that publishing is a business, as well as a passion.”

“We are delighted to have the support of Penguin Random House Canada and Westwood Creative Artists in celebrating the work of our graduates and alumni,” Pittaway said.

There were 25 submissions, which were judged by a jury consisting of a Penguin Random House Canada nonfiction editor, a representative from the King's School of Journalism and an agent from Westwood Creative Artists.

The winner will be announced in mid-May.

The 2019 finalists are:

- **Gregor Craigie:** *Calm Before the Quake: Shaking Complacency in the Seismic Zone* examines the enormous threat facing many North American cities from earthquakes, tsunamis and even volcanoes. It demonstrates that the threat is real, that much more needs to be done to prepare and that the consequences will be dire if the advice of experts isn't heeded. Says Craigie: "This is a book written for the more than 100-million people who live in North America's seismic zones, many of whom do not realize the risk in their community." Gregor Craigie is a journalist who has worked at the BBC World Service, CBS Radio, and Public Radio International. He has also worked for *The Current* on CBC Radio, and is now the host of *On The Island*, in Victoria, B.C.
- **Marsha Faubert:** *Unstated: War, Memory and an Exile's Silence* follows Marsha Faubert's search for the truth about the life of her mother-in-law, a World War II refugee and survivor of Nazi labour camps who became an indentured factory worker in Quebec after the war. Faubert writes: "*Unstated* explores the silence that prevents the children of war survivors from knowing their parents and their heritage, and casts a shadow over family life. How does one recover from the trauma of war and exile? Is it better to know, or to be ignorant, of the suffering of one's parents? *Unstated* is the story of one woman who was the face of postwar immigration in Canada, but it is also the story of every refugee, traumatized and displaced by armed conflict, and forced to make a new home in a foreign land." Marsha Faubert is a Toronto lawyer who uses the tools of her trade to write stories of ordinary people overwhelmed by the forces of power and injustice.
- **Anne Fenn:** *Failing Out Loud: The Year I Lost My Voice* is about failure, voice and voice failure. Part memoir, part scientific and philosophical inquiry, the book tells the story of how and why Fenn lost her speaking voice for a year. The book also explores the arcane interconnection between mind and body, the past and the present, medical and scientific findings about "functional disorders" and the compelling question, *What is voice?* Says Fenn: "On March 13, 2009, I woke up to discover I'd lost my voice. I wrote it off as a minor fender-bender with my vocal cords; my voice might be in the shop for a few days, but it would come back. But my voice didn't come back. For about a year." Anne Fenn is a Toronto-based writer, teacher, former TV development executive and occasional stand-up comedian with over 20 years' experience writing comedy for film, TV, radio, stage and print.
- **Stacey McLeod:** Says McLeod: "We live under the illusion we're oversharing and overwhelmed by content and memories to pass down to our children and future generations. This is true of the short-term, but the reality is we're also losing family stories and community records at alarming rates. The shift from paper to pixels has changed the way we remember and it's threatening to leave a memory hole on the historical record—unless we act now." *For the Record: The Race to Live Forever in Virtual Afterlives* is about the extraordinary people and players crafting and guarding our digital future, the impact it's having on the record, and the ways so-called average people are achieving digital immortality. But at its core, this book is about legacy—your legacy, the

author's legacy and the lives of all who have lived before us and deserve a place on a permanent human record. Stacey McLeod is a Toronto journalist, editor and mom, and part of the King's MFA graduating class of 2019.

- **Aaron Williams:** *On the Hillside: Working with the Last Loggers* is a story about a controversial logging operation outside Port Clements in Haida Gwaii, British Columbia. Williams writes: "The area, known as Collison Point, is being logged by Husby Forest Products; my dad, Kelly Williams, a third-generation logger nearing retirement, is the foreman. In the spring of 2018, protestors arrived and set up a camp blocking access to Collison Point. They remained for six weeks before they were removed by the RCMP. During the blockade, many workers left the island to look for work, some stayed but what had once been steady work for many in Port Clements suddenly became precarious. With the blockade and its aftermath, it has become impossible to avoid the tension gripping the island. Haida Gwaii is deeply divided on which way to steer its forest industry. And while there is a strong movement to shut down logging on the islands, it is also a major employer, providing jobs for both Haida and settlers." Aaron Williams grew up in Northern B.C. and now lives with his family in Halifax.

Penguin Random House Canada, the country's largest book publisher, aims to nourish a universal passion for reading by connecting authors and their writing with readers everywhere. The company publishes over 500 new original titles per year in the North American market across 19 distinct imprints and distributes another 10,000 titles in Canada on behalf of Penguin Random House publishers in the U.S. and the U.K., and many clients. It has also developed its own Toronto-based audiobook program, with over 125 originated recordings now available. Visit penguinrandomhouse.ca for more information.

The Master of Fine Arts in Creative Nonfiction program is a two-year limited residency program offered jointly by Dalhousie University and the University of King's College. The program allows students to combine short, intense, on-campus sessions with ongoing one-to-one mentoring by professional nonfiction writers, editors and teachers. The program will graduate its fifth class in May 2019. So far, more than 20 graduates have published or signed contracts to publish books developed in the program.

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About the University of King's College

Established in 1789, King's College is Canada's oldest chartered university. A small and extraordinarily lively academic community located in Halifax, Nova Scotia, King's is known nationally and internationally for its highly acclaimed interdisciplinary programs in the humanities and journalism, including our Master of Fine Arts in Creative Non-Fiction.

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