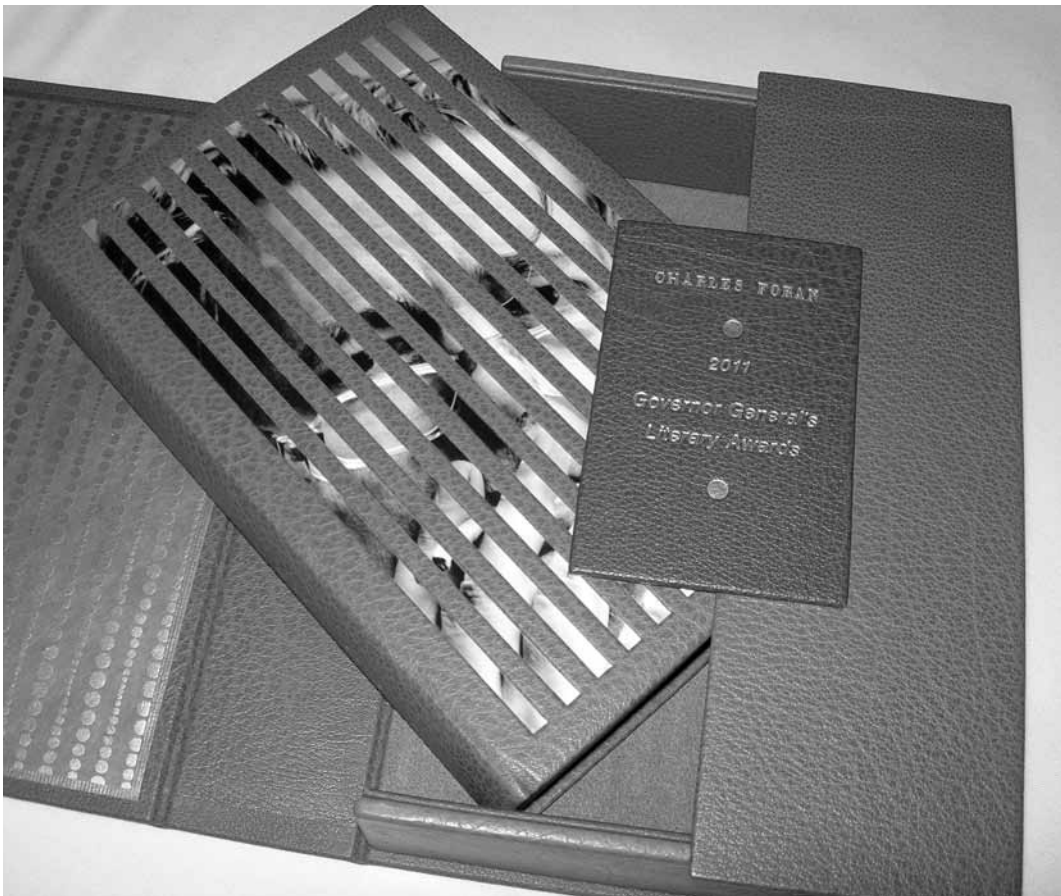


Chez “Grandpa Book”

MARLENE CHAN reports from the 75th anniversary of the Governor General’s Literary Awards, which she attended on behalf of the Society.



Charles Foran, Mordecai: The Life and Times, winner of the Governor General’s Literary Award for Non-Fiction in English, 2011. Marlene Chan photo

GOVERNOR GENERAL DAVID JOHNSTON is known to his grandchildren as “Grandpa Book.” His passion for reading and heart-felt appreciation of authors and their publications on behalf of all Canadians were much in evidence at the gala event held at Rideau Hall

in November, celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Governor General’s Literary Awards.

For the first time ever, the Alcuin Society received an invitation. I was honoured and privileged to attend on the Society’s behalf, joining an august company that included former

governors general Edward Schreyer (1979–84) and Adrienne Clarkson (1999–2005). Pierre-Daniel LeFond attended on behalf of his wife, Michaëlle Jean (2005–10), who regrettably was unable to attend in person, and Gerda Hnatyshyn and Diane Fowler LeBlanc represented their husbands, the late Ramon “Ray” John Hnatyshyn (1990–95) and Roméo LeBlanc (1995–99).

The Governor General’s Literary Arts Award was established by Canada’s 15th governor general, John Buchan, 1st Baron Tweedsmuir, in 1936. Lord and Lady Tweedsmuir, both writers and promoters of literacy in Canada, had established the first proper library at Rideau Hall. Tweedsmuir’s photograph was prominently displayed at the entrance to a small room devoted

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

Recipients of the 2011 Governor General’s Literary Awards were chosen from 1,684 submissions from English- and French-language publishers, representing authors, illustrators and translators from across Canada in seven categories:

CHILDREN’S LITERATURE – TEXT

ENGLISH: Christopher Moore, Toronto, *From Then to Now: A Short History of the World* (Tundra Books; distributed by Random House of Canada)

FRENCH: Martin Fournier, Québec, *Les aventures de Radisson – 1. L’enfer ne brûle pas* (Les éditions du Septentrion; distributed by Diffusion Dimedia)

CHILDREN’S LITERATURE – ILLUSTRATION

ENGLISH: Cybèle Young, Toronto, *Ten Birds*, text by Cybèle Young (Kids Can Press; distributed by University of Toronto Press)

FRENCH: Caroline Merola, Montreal, *Lili et les poilus*, text by Caroline Merola (Dominique et Compagnie, a division of Éditions Héritage; distributed by Messageries ADP, Groupe Sogides)

TRANSLATION

ENGLISH: Donald Winkler, Montreal, *Partita for Glenn Gould* (McGill-Queen’s University Press; distributed by Georgetown Terminal Warehouses) English translation of *Partita pour Glenn Gould* by Georges Leroux (Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal)

FRENCH: Maryse Warda, Montreal, *Toxique ou L’incident dans l’autobus* (Dramaturges Éditeurs; distributed by Diffusion Dimedia) French translation of the play *The Toxic Bus Incident* by Greg MacArthur

POETRY

ENGLISH: Phil Hall, Perth (Ontario), *Killdeer* (BookThug; distributed by Literary Press Group)

FRENCH: Louise Dupré, Montreal, *Plus haut que les flammes* (Éditions du Noroît; distributed by Diffusion Dimedia)

DRAMA

ENGLISH: Erin Shields, Toronto, *If We Were Birds* (Playwrights Canada Press; distributed by University of Toronto Press)

FRENCH: Normand Charette, Montreal, *Ce qui meurt en dernier* (Leméac Éditeur / Actes Sud; distributed by Socadis)

NON-FICTION

ENGLISH: Charles Foran, Peterborough (Ontario), *Mordecai: The Life and Times* (Alfred A. Knopf Canada; distributed by Random House of Canada)

FRENCH: Georges Leroux, Montreal, *Wanderer : essai sur le Voyage d’hiver de Franz Schubert* (Éditions Nota bene; distributed by Socadis)

FICTION

ENGLISH: Patrick deWitt, Portland (Oregon) [originally from Vancouver Island], *The Sisters Brothers* (House of Anansi Press; distributed by HarperCollins Canada)

FRENCH: Perrine Leblanc, Montreal, *L’homme blanc* (Le Quartanier; distributed by Diffusion Dimedia)



Book display at the gala ceremony for the Governor General's Literary Awards, November 2011. Marlene Chan photo

to the collection of all previous award-winning books over those 75 years, numbering over 600. During her tenure as governor general, Adrienne Clarkson undertook to research and obtain copies of all previous award-winning books for Rideau Hall's library. An exhibition of the books will be open to the public at Rideau Hall throughout the 75th-anniversary year, until November 2012.

Johnston opened the evening's awards ceremony in Rideau Hall's large yellow ballroom with an introduction of the extraordinary John Buchan, a novelist and author of some 100 books. It was heartening to learn that storytelling and imagination as part of a unique Canadian cultural expression was so encouraged, supported and valued over the years by successive governors general. During the awards ceremony, the recipients each expressed sincere gratitude for this recognition by the governor general and the Government of Canada through the Canada Council for the Arts.

The 2011 Governor General's Literary Award winners were individually presented by their respective publishers to His Excellency and the audience of approximately 250 guests. Each received a monetary award of \$25,000,

accompanied by a leather-bound copy of their winning book by internationally renowned Montreal bookbinder Lise Dubois. All of these magnificent books were on display in the reception hall for viewing. This tradition of providing a specially bound book began in 1973. It originated with master bookbinder Pierre Ouvrard, who retired in 2004.

Music was seamlessly integrated throughout the evening; three ensembles (including an RCMP contingent) performed chamber music, jazz and popular music. At their leisure, guests were invited to tour adjoining parts of Rideau Hall, including the library, small and large dining rooms, a western-style sitting room and three imposing greenhouses. Guides stationed inside each room provided information about the residence and the carefully selected furnishings and artworks of this National Historic Site.

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~ Marlene Chan is a contributing editor of *Amphora*.