



Canadian Jewish Literary Awards 2016 Winners To Be Celebrated October 30

Toronto — Eight outstanding books have been chosen to receive Canadian Jewish Literary Awards for 2016.

From 60 works on Jewish themes by Canadian writers submitted for the annual awards, winners have been declared for fiction, memoir/biography, history, scholarship, Jewish thought and culture, Holocaust literature, Yiddish, and children and youth fiction.

“The depth and breadth of the submissions shows the vibrancy of the culture and the appeal of Jewish themes for fiction and non-fiction writers, both Jewish and non-Jewish,” says Jury Chair, Edward Trapunski.

The gala awards ceremony will be held on October 30, 2016 at 2 pm in the Tribute Communities Recital Hall, Accolade East Building, York University 4700 Keele St.

The winning authors will be present to speak and to autograph their books. All are invited and admission is free.

The Honorees

Fiction

The Mystics of Mile End (Freehand Press), a first novel by former Montrealer Sigal Samuel, captures the spirit of the duality of one of the world’s most vibrant neighborhoods. At once an exploration of Kabbalah, queer culture and physics, the book is a family saga that grapples with the tensions between science and faith. To discover a new writer with so much talent and potential is a singular thrill.

Holocaust Literature

When she was 19, cultural historian, poet and biographer, Agata Tuszynska discovered she was Jewish. In *A Family History of Fear* (Knopf), she comes to terms with her Jewish identity,

explores her family roots and considers the often-troubled relationship between the Jews and Poles that forced her family to keep its roots secret. Agata Tuszynska lives in Warsaw, Paris and Toronto. The book has been acclaimed in Polish and French and has just been published in Canada in English.

Memoir/Biography

Howard Akler's memoir, *Men of Action* (Coach House Press), is a small, powerful gem of a book that chronicles the death of his father. Written much like a diary, the book shifts backward and forward in time as Akler processes his father's life, his strengths and weaknesses, and their sometimes fractious relationship. With his father in a coma after brain surgery, he also navigates the uncertain terrain of consciousness and identity.

Children and Youth Fiction

With *44 Hours or Strike!* (Second Story Press), Anne Dublin creates a sharp portrait of the interior lives of two Jewish sisters who find themselves on a picket line during the failed Toronto Dressmakers' Strike of 1931. The book illuminates the lives of the young women and their widowed mother struggling to survive as an immigrant family during a time of anti-Semitism during the Great Depression.

History

Canadian historian Michael Marrus has been studying the Holocaust for more than 30 years. With *Lessons of the Holocaust* (University of Toronto), Marrus examines what, if anything, we can take away from the singular catastrophe of the 20th century that would provide a measure of perspective. Can we really learn anything from horror and brutality? This book wins in the History category because it defines the role of the Holocaust in the historical process.

Yiddish

Vilna, My Vilna: Stories by Abraham Karpinowitz, (Syracuse University Press), a translation from the Yiddish by Vancouver translator, Helen Mintz, is a portrait of the Jerusalem of Lithuania. The stories of fishwives, cobblers, criminals and roustabouts preserves the particular language of Vilna's working class Jews. In this deft depiction of a now-vanished world, Helen Mintz gracefully maintains the colorful idiomatic Yiddish for English language readers.

Jewish Thought and Culture

H.G. Adler: Life, Literature, Legacy (Northwestern University Press), edited by Julia Creet, Sara R. Horowitz and Amira Bojadzija-Dan, is the first collection of essays in English dedicated to the life and work of German-language author H. G. Adler. The essays examine Adler's writing in relation to his life, especially his memory as a survivor of the Nazi death camps. Historian, Simon Schama, says that Adler's work deserves a place beside other twentieth century witnesses

of the concentration camps such as Primo Levi. This is not only the first collection of essays in English dedicated to Adler's life and work, it is an important volume that will be a standard reference in many fields for years to come.

Scholarship

In *Calypso Jews: Jewishness in the Caribbean Literary Imagination*, (Columbia University Press) Carleton University scholar, Sarah Phillips Casteel, explores a relatively unexplored territory – the not-accidental presence of Jewishness in Caribbean writing. Jews have been living and thriving in the Caribbean since the expulsion from Spain during the Spanish Inquisition and it remained a sanctuary through the Holocaust. Many Judaic ideas and values have been absorbed into the islands' culture and put to use in works of fiction, poetry and art. Casteel's remarkable work of scholarship has finally brought much of this fascinating story of cultural penetration to light.

The Canadian Jewish Literary Awards was founded by a group of prominent writers, editors and scholars to celebrate the vibrancy of Jewish literature and culture in Canada. The Awards are hosted and sponsored by the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies at York University, with the co-sponsorship of a consortium of other programs, including Western University's Holocaust Literature Research Institute, the Concordia University Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies, the journal *Parchment* in the Faculty of Arts at Ryerson University, McGill Department of Jewish Studies, and the Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto.

The Canadian Jewish Literary Awards would like to express its gratitude for the support of The Gerald Sheff and Sanitha Kachan Charitable Foundation, the lead benefactor for the Canadian Jewish Literary Awards, and to our major donors. We thank all the members of the community who have contributed to the sustenance of Jewish literature and thought in Canada.

Please register for the awards ceremony at cjla2016.eventbrite.ca. For more information, please visit www.cjlawards.ca

Media may contact the chair of the Canadian Jewish Literary Awards jury, Edward Trapunski, at 416-720-4700 or info@cjlawards.ca.