



## GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE

Press Release

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## 2023 GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE WINNER

### *Best Barbarian* • Roger Reeves

W. W. Norton

**TORONTO – June 7, 2023** – The Griffin Poetry Prize is pleased to announce the 2023 Griffin Poetry Prize winner, *Best Barbarian* by Roger Reeves, who received C\$130,000 in prize money. The other finalists were each awarded C\$10,000.

Judges Nikola Madzirov (Macedonia), Gregory Scofield (Canada), and Natasha Trethewey (USA) each read 602 books of poetry, including 54 translations from 20 languages, submitted by 229 publishers from 20 different countries. The trustees select the judges annually.

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The announcement was made at the end of the Griffin Poetry Prize Readings held at Koerner Hall. The evening included a selection of readings by the six finalists, Fanny Howe – this year’s Lifetime Recognition Award recipient, and Emily Riddle – the Canadian First Book Prize winner, who read from her winning book *The Big Melt*.

### 2023 Griffin Poetry Prize Shortlist

#### *The Threshold* • Robyn Creswell

Translated from the Arabic written by **Iman Mersal**  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux

#### *The Hurting Kind* • Ada Limón

Corsair Poetry

#### *Exculpatory Lilies* • Susan Musgrave

McClelland & Stewart

#### *Time Is a Mother* • Ocean Vuong

Cape Poetry, and Penguin Press

The Griffin Poetry Prize was founded in 2000 to encourage and celebrate excellence in poetry. The prize is for first edition books of poetry written in, or translated into, English and submitted from anywhere in the world.



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### 2023 Griffin Poetry Prize Longlist

*Tasos Livaditis – Poems, Volume II* • **Manolis Aligizakis**, Canada  
Translated from the Greek written by **Tasos Livaditis**, Greece  
Libros Libertad

*The Study of Human Life* • **Joshua Bennett**, USA  
Penguin Books

*The Threshold* • **Robyn Creswell**, USA  
Translated from the Arabic written by **Iman Mersal**, Egypt/Canada  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux

*The Jaguar* • **Sarah Holland-Batt**, Australia  
University of Queensland Press

*The Hurting Kind* • **Ada Limón**, USA  
Corsair Poetry

*Exculpatory Lilies* • **Susan Musgrave**, Canada  
McClelland & Stewart

*Balladz* • **Sharon Olds**, USA  
Alfred A. Knopf

*Best Barbarian* • **Roger Reeves**, USA  
W. W. Norton

*Bless the Daughter Raised by a Voice in Her Head* • **Warsan Shire**, Somali/UK  
Penguin Canada

*Time Is a Mother* • **Ocean Vuong**, Vietnam/USA  
Cape Poetry, and Penguin Press

### NOTE TO BOOKSELLERS:

Griffin Poetry Prize book stickers are supplied free of charge.  
Please contact Ruth Smith to place an order.

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#### Shortlisted Publishers' web sites:

Cape Poetry: [penguin.co.uk](http://penguin.co.uk)  
Corsair Poetry: [littlebrown.co.uk](http://littlebrown.co.uk)  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux: [us.macmillan.com](http://us.macmillan.com)  
McClelland & Stewart: [penguinrandomhouse.ca](http://penguinrandomhouse.ca)  
W. W. Norton: [wwnorton.com](http://wwnorton.com)  
Penguin Press: [penguin.com](http://penguin.com)

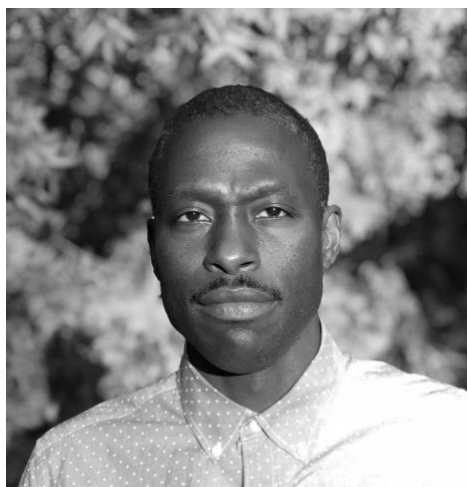
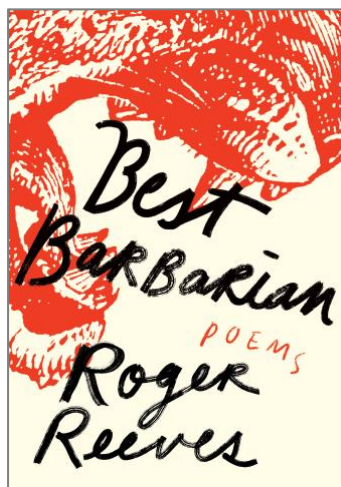
#### Photograph Credits:

Ana Schwartz (Roger Reeves)



## GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE

### 2023 GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE WINNER



***Best Barbarian* • Roger Reeves**  
W. W. Norton

**Biography:** Roger Reeves is the author of *King Me* and the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, a Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Fellowship from the Poetry Foundation, and a 2015 Whiting Award, among other honours. His work has appeared in *Poetry*, *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review*, and elsewhere. He lives in Austin, Texas.

**Judges' Citation:** "Among the many remarkable poems in *Best Barbarian* is 'Journey to Satchidananda' in which the poet writes: 'The Japanese call it Kintsugi. / Where the vessel broken, only gold will permit / Its healing. Its history.' The beauty of that repair, which does not hide nor erase the evidence of trauma – of history – but transforms it, is the abiding metaphor in this capacious and wide-ranging meditation. At the intersections of history and myth, elegy and celebration, these poems chart the ruptures and violences enacted across time and space – particularly against black humanity – while leaning always toward beauty. Beauty and tenderness abound in this collection that dares to risk both: a brilliant and ambitious book."