



## GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE

Press Release

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### THE GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE ANNOUNCES THE 2024 SHORTLIST, AND THE 2024 LIFETIME RECOGNITION AWARD RECIPIENT

**TORONTO - April 17, 2024** - The Griffin Poetry Prize is pleased to announce the **2024 Shortlist** and **Don McKay** (Canada) as the **2024 Lifetime Recognition Award recipient**.

*A Crash Course in Molotov Cocktails* • **Amelia M. Glaser**, USA  
and **Yuliya Ilchuk**, Ukraine  
translated from the Ukrainian written by **Halyna Kruk**, Ukraine  
Arrowsmith Press

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*To 2040* • **Jorie Graham**, USA  
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*School of Instructions* • **Ishion Hutchinson**, Jamaica  
Faber & Faber, and Farrar, Straus & Giroux

*Door* • **Ann Lauterbach**, USA  
Penguin Books

*Self-Portrait in the Zone of Silence* • **George McWhirter**, Canada/Northern Ireland  
translated from the Spanish written by **Homero Aridjis**, Mexico  
New Directions Publishing

Judges Albert F. Moritz (Canada), Jan Wagner (Germany), and Anne Waldman (USA) each read 592 books of poetry, including 49 translations from 22 languages, submitted by 235 publishers from 14 different countries.

Instituted in 2006, the Griffin trustees bestow the Lifetime Recognition Award to international artists working in poetry.

The Readings will be held at Koerner Hall on Wednesday, June 5 and the evening will include readings by the 2024 Shortlisted poets, Don McKay, and the Canadian First Book Prize winner - to be announced on May 29. The event will also feature a recitation by one of the 2024 Finalists of Poetry in Voice/Les voix de la poésie, a Canada-wide school recitation competition.



## GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE

Tickets are now on sale and can be purchased at the box office of Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor Street West, or online at <https://rcmusic.com/events-and-performances/2024-griffin-poetry-prize-readings>.

General Admission, with 2024 Anthology – \$30.00  
Senior/Student, with 2024 Anthology – \$25.00

To purchase this year's *Griffin Poetry Prize Anthology*, contact your favourite bookstore to pre-order. If you're interested in anthologies from previous years, visit <https://houseofanansi.com/collections/poetry>

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### **Shortlisted Publishers' web sites:**

Arrowsmith Press: [arrowsmithpress.com](http://arrowsmithpress.com)  
Copper Canyon Press: [coppercanyonpress.org](http://coppercanyonpress.org)  
Faber & Faber: [faber.co.uk](http://faber.co.uk)  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux: [us.macmillan.com](http://us.macmillan.com)  
New Directions Publishing: [ndbooks.com](http://ndbooks.com)  
Penguin Books: [penguin.com](http://penguin.com)

### **Photograph Credits:**

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Mark Van Mannen (George McWhirter)  
Marlene Creates (Don McKay)



## GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE

### THE 2024 GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE SHORTLIST



*A Crash Course in Molotov Cocktails* • Amelia M. Glaser and Yuliya Ilchuk  
translated from the Ukrainian written by Halyna Kruk  
Arrowsmith Press

**Biographies:** Amelia M. Glaser translates primarily from Yiddish, Ukrainian, and Russian. She is Professor of Literature at UC San Diego, where she holds the Chair in Judaic Studies. She is the author of *Jews and Ukrainians in Russia's Literary Borderlands*, and *Songs in Dark Times: Yiddish Poetry of Struggle from Scottsboro to Palestine*. She is the editor of *Stories of Khmelnytsky: Literary Legacies of the 1648 Ukrainian Cossack Uprising* and, with Steven Lee, *Comintern Aesthetics*. She is currently writing a book about contemporary Ukrainian poetry.

Yulia Ilchuk is Assistant Professor of Slavic Literature and Culture at Stanford University. She is the author of an award-winning book, *Nikolai Gogol's Hybrid Performance*, and a translator of contemporary Ukrainian poetry. Ilchuk's most recent book project, *The Vanished: Memory, Temporality, Identity in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine*, revisits collective memory and trauma, post-memory, remembrance, memorials, and reconciliation in Ukraine.

Halyna Kruk was born in Lviv, Ukraine. She is the author of five books of poetry, a collection of short stories, and four children's books. She has garnered multiple awards for her writing, including the Bohdan Ihor Antonych Prize, the Polish Gaude Polonia Fellowship, the Bookforum Best Book Award, and the Kovaliv Foundation Prize for Prose. She has served as vice president of the PEN Ukraine, holds a Ph.D in Ukrainian literature, and is professor of European and Ukrainian baroque literature at the Ivan Franko National University in Lviv.

**Judges' Citation:** "These poems of witness may be wrought from a horrendous war, composed in times of turmoil and void of leisure, yet the Ukrainian poet Halyna Kruk's mastery is evident on every page, the keenly observed scenes and perplexing details visualizing the dire situation of her country but also its people's defiance: 'war doesn't suit the rest of the world / like mutilation with an evening gown: / the look's too heavy / the language too sharp / the details too brutal'. Kruk's poems grapple with the bare existential questions, every so often turning into prayer, into conversations with a merciless god, pleading to not 'quiet the voice of anger'. What do you take with you when 'even keys / are non-essential'? How to maintain hope when realizing that human warmth may be deadly in times of war and its thermal imaging devices, how to cope with the loss of certainties while grasshoppers keep on chirping and shells are landing on the fields like birds of passage? Sometimes tender, offering surprising moments of stubbornly persisting beauty,

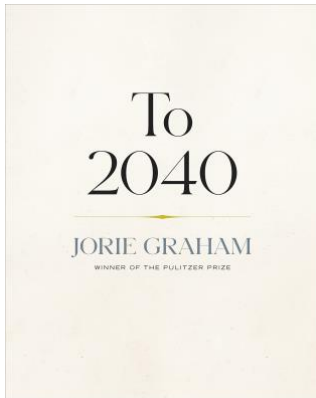


## GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE

sometimes bitter and hard, Kruk's poems are also a reminder for the rest of the world to 'take us in, like unpleasant medicine'. A necessary and powerful collection."



## GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE



### *To 2040* • Jorie Graham Copper Canyon Press

**Biography:** Jorie Graham was born in New York City, the daughter of a journalist and a sculptor. She was raised in Rome, Italy and educated in French schools. She studied philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris before attending New York University as an undergraduate, where she studied filmmaking. She received an MFA in poetry from the University of Iowa.

She is the author of fifteen collections of poems. Her poetry has been widely translated and has been the recipient of numerous awards, among them the Pulitzer Prize, the Forward Prize, the Los Angeles Times Book Award, the International Nonino Prize, and the Rebekah Johnson Bobbitt National Prize for Poetry from the Library of Congress. She served as a Chancellor of The Academy of American Poets from 1997 to 2003.

She lives in Massachusetts and is currently the Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard University.

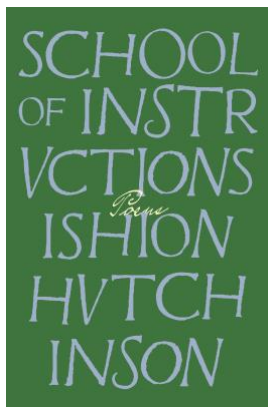
**Judges' Citation:** "A question that by sparing its question mark assumes all the weight of an irrefutable and relentless answer ('Are we extinct yet.') lures us into Jorie Graham's *To 2040*, a moving and unsettling vision of an imminent future, of a present already on the brink of perdition, yet at the same time a declaration of love to a world that will cease to exist or, if it continues to be, then without us to laud it. In this most tender of apocalyptic poems, doing without the outworn images of doom and only hinting at a strange rising sun, at gold that 'seems chipped from / what used to be Venice' (and at illness, the frailty of the body), Graham encourages us to listen, to look, to stand still, to marvel and deplore while we still can: 'the stream. It is a temple. It is / rushing. How could we / not have heard.' With lines of great brevity and mobility, leading up to and culminating in a coda of utmost sensuality, in the intense portrait of a long-awaited rain almost tangible on the reader's face, we are invited to ponder the bloom and the losses, the natural phenomena and their anything-but-commonness, encountering the light and 'the distance in it - its howling - its gigantic / memory' as well as a raven whose 'coat / is sun'. A superb elegy, as thoughtful as it is thought-provoking, a virtuoso plea for curiosity and care, admonition and celebration at once."



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### ***School of Instructions* • Ishion Hutchinson**

Faber & Faber, and Farrar, Straus & Giroux

**Biography:** Ishion Hutchinson was born in Port Antonio, Jamaica. He is the author of the poetry collections *Far District*, which won the PEN/Joyce Osterweil Award for Poetry, and *House of Lords and Commons*, which received the National Book Critics Circle Award for Poetry. He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Joseph Brodsky Rome Prize in Literature, the Whiting Award, and the Windham-Campbell Prize for Poetry, among other honours.

**Judges' Citation:** "Primordial elementals are here: we are by the sea, in the desert, in the trenches, in the mind of a schoolchild discovering 'natural' history, in vibrant daily life, in anabasis of war, and studying the innocent volunteers going to disease and slaughter. *School of Instructions* is a transcendent hybridic feast of a book, an innovative condensed epic comprising startling poetry, primary sources, Biblical naming and mapping, and a haunting trajectory of the British Empire's Middle Eastern campaigns of WWI juxtaposed with 20<sup>th</sup> century Jamaica. Hutchinson's brilliant transmission is deeply intuitive and profound as scholarly and poetic gnosis – you feel instructed by the ongoing koan, coil, knot of colonialism ingrained with civilization."



## GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE



**Door • Ann Lauterbach**  
Penguin Books

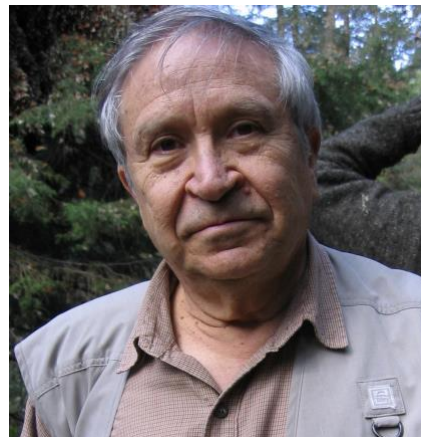
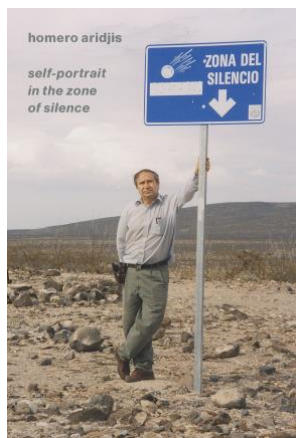
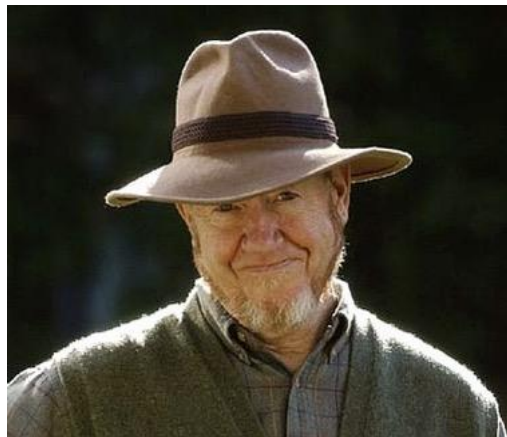
**Biography:** Poet and essayist Ann Lauterbach is the author of ten previous books of poetry and three books of essays, including *The Night Sky: Writings on the Poetics of Experience* and *The Given & The Chosen*. Her 2009 collection of poetry, *Or to Begin Again*, was a finalist for the National Book Award. Lauterbach’s work has been recognised by fellowships from, among others, the Guggenheim Foundation and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. She is the Ruth and David Schwab II Professor of Languages and Literatures at Bard College. Born in New York City, she lives in Germantown, New York.

**Judges’ Citation:** “Ann Lauterbach has brought together a suite of remarkable poems in her dazzling book *Door*, which troubles and stirs the paradox: the place for ‘self’ in mediated space. Her door is the existential hinge of the poetry. A poem is a door. A book is a door. We construct doors to keep probing eyes away. We shut ourselves into scriptoriums to convene with fear and hope, struggling how to weave the poem, what do we allow. Lauterbach’s tableaux, her subtle, multivalent sound, and panoramic consciousness – all shimmering, generous. She magnetizes others to enter, and deeply inhabit the sweep of her uniquely crafted, exquisite poetry.”





## GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE



*Self-Portrait in the Zone of Silence* • George McWhirter  
translated from the Spanish written by Homero Aridjis  
New Directions Press

**Biographies:** George McWhirter is an Irish-Canadian writer, translator, editor, teacher, and Vancouver's first Poet Laureate. His first book of poetry, *Catalan Poems*, was a joint winner of the first Commonwealth Poetry Prize with Chinua Achebe's *Beware, Soul Brother*. He has translated works by Mario Arregui, Carlos Fuentes, and José Emilio Pacheco.

He received his M.A. from the University of British Columbia and stayed on to become a full professor in 1983 and head of the Creative Writing Department from 1983 to 1993. He retired as a Professor Emeritus in 2005.

He was made a life member of the League of Canadian Poets in 2005 and is also a member of the Writers' Union of Canada, and PEN International. He currently writes full-time and lives in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Homero Aridjis was born in Contepec, Michoacán, Mexico. He has written fifty-one books of poetry and prose and has won many important literary prizes. Formerly Mexico's ambassador to Switzerland, the Netherlands, and UNESCO, he is also the President Emeritus of PEN International and the founder and president of the Group of 100, an environmentalist association of artists and scientists.

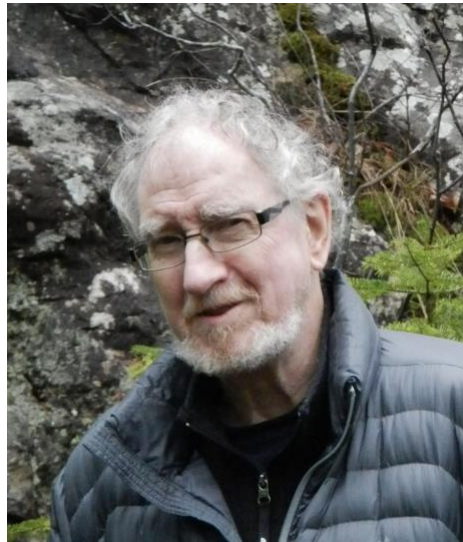
**Judges' Citation:** "*Self-Portrait in the Zone of Silence* brings poet-translator George McWhirter's adept English to the service of a great world-poet, Homero Aridjis. The book's enchanting variety of tones and subjects expresses a rounded human being engaged with our total experience, from the familial to the political, from bodily sensations to dream, vision, philosophic thought, and history, from hope to foreboding. A keynote is the sense of a person speaking with us plainly and yet from kinship with a light that bathes, and springs from, each thing."



## GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE

### 2024 LIFETIME RECOGNITION AWARD

Don McKay



Don McKay's books of poetry include *Birding, or Desire* (1983), *Night Field* (1991), *Apparatus* (1997), *Another Gravity* (2000), *Strike/Slip* (2006), *Paradoxides* (2012) and *Lurch* (2021). *Camber: selected poems*, appeared in 2004. Five of his books have been nominated for Governor General's Awards, and two of them – *Night Field* and *Another Gravity* – received that award. He has been nominated for the Griffin Poetry Prize three times and received it for *Strike/Slip* in 2007. Between 1975 and 2018 he served as co-editor and co-publisher with Brick Books. After teaching English and Creative Writing at the Universities of Western Ontario and New Brunswick for twenty-seven years, he now writes full time. From 1991 to 1997 he edited *The Fiddlehead*, and he has served as a workshop leader for many institutions and writers' groups. He was the Associate Director for poetry at the Banff Centre for the Arts for 14 years. His abiding interest in natural history and the environment has led to four books on the poetics of wilderness: *Vis à Vis* (2001), *Deactivated West 100* (2005), *The Shell of the Tortoise* (2011), and *All New Animal Acts* (2020). His collected poems, *Angular Unconformity*, was published in 2014. In 2009 he was named to the Order of Canada.

Don McKay currently makes his home in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.