



## GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE

Press Release  
Toronto, June 5, 2024

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### CANADIANS SWEEP THE 2024 GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE AWARDS

**George McWhirter** wins \$78,000 for the international prize for his translation of  
*Self-Portrait in the Zone of Silence*  
Written in Spanish by Mexican poet **Homero Aridjis**  
New Directions Publishing

The international prize of C\$130,000 is shared 60% to the translator, 40% to the original author; each of the other finalists receive C\$10,000.

**Don McKay** wins \$25,000 for the 2024 Lifetime Recognition Award, nominated by the trustees of the international Griffin Poetry Prize.

**Maggie Burton** wins \$10,000 for the Canadian First Book Prize for *Chores*, plus a six-week residency in Umbria, Italy in partnership with the Civitella Ranieri Foundation.

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### 2024 Griffin Poetry Prize Shortlist

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

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

*School of Instructions* • **Ishion Hutchinson**  
Faber & Faber, and Farrar, Straus & Giroux

*Door* • **Ann Lauterbach**  
Penguin Books

*Self-Portrait in the Zone of Silence* • **George McWhirter**  
Translated from the Spanish written by **Homero Aridjis**  
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.

The international winners were announced at the end of the Griffin Poetry Prize Readings held in Toronto and included a selection of readings by the finalists, as well as Don McKay, and Maggie Burton.

James Hoag, a fifteen-year-old student at the Prince of Wales Secondary School, Vancouver, British Columbia, gave an exciting recitation of "Let's Not Get it Together" by RC Weslowski. James was a finalist in the 2024 Poetry in Voice/Les voix de la poésie competition, held in Ottawa in April 2024.



## GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE

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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### **Publishers' websites:**

Arrowsmith Press: [arrowsmithpress.com](http://arrowsmithpress.com)  
Breakwater Books: [breakwaterbooks.com](http://breakwaterbooks.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 Press: [ndbooks.com](http://ndbooks.com)  
Penguin Books: [penguin.com](http://penguin.com)

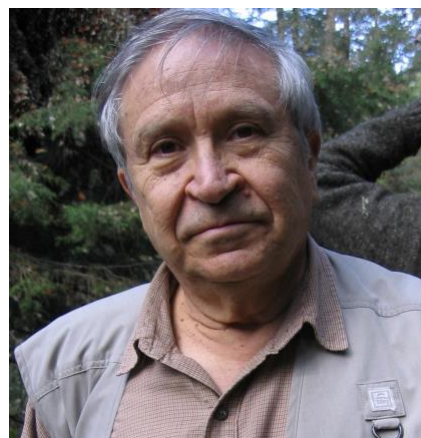
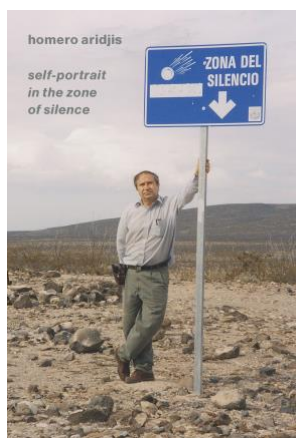
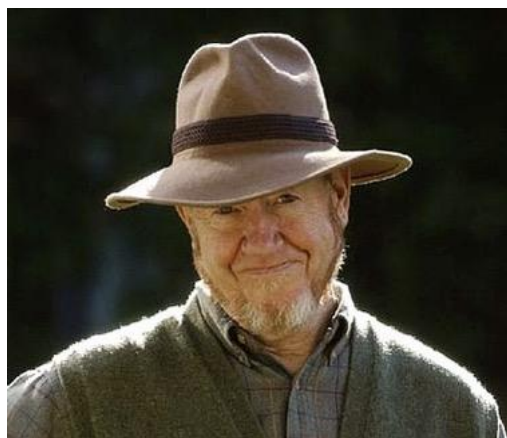
### **Photograph Credits:**

Betty Aridjis (Homero Aridjis)  
Mark Van Mannen (George McWhirter)  
Marlene Creates (Don McKay)  
Kelly Hynes (Maggie Burton)



## GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE

### 2024 GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE WINNERS



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

**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.

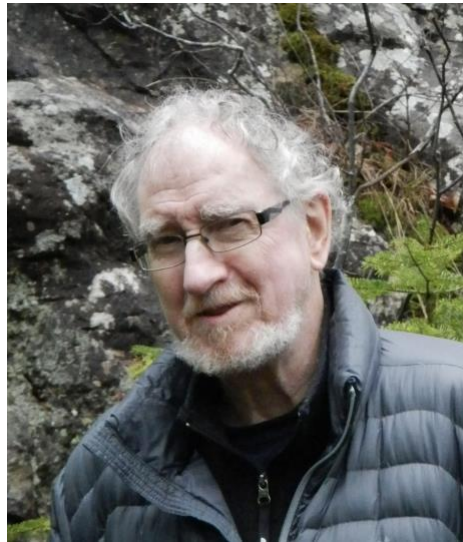
**Judges' Citation:** "*Self-Portrait in the Zone of Silence* brings poet-translator George McWhirter's adept English to the service of a great world-poet, Homero Aridjis. The book's enchanting variety of tones and subjects expresses a rounded human being engaged with our total experience, from the familial 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.



## GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE

### 2024 CANADIAN FIRST BOOK PRIZE WINNER



**Chores • Maggie Burton**  
Breakwater Books

**Biography:** Newfoundland poet Maggie Burton is a multi-genre writer, professional violinist, and municipal politician, serving her second term as Councillor at Large for the City of St. John's. Burton holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Memorial University and has spent much of her career working with the Suzuki Talent Education Program and the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra. She was awarded the Riddle Fence poetry prize prior to releasing her debut book of poetry, *Chores* (Breakwater Books, 2023), which was shortlisted for the Gerald Lampert Memorial Award and has had two poems previously receive NL Arts and Letters Awards. Prior to *Chores*, she has had work published in *Prism*, *The Malahat Review*, *Riddle Fence*, *Room* and elsewhere. Through her poetry, Burton explores the social and physical realities surrounding women's domestic labour, sexuality, and relationships through a queer, feminist, working class lens. She is currently working on her debut collection of short fiction. Burton writes and lives on the Avalon where she is raising her four young children.

**Judges' Citation:** "Maggie Burton's *Chores* is charming and profound, traditional and inventive. Its combination of qualities seems effortless but is not only the innate fruit of a vision but the result of skillful poetic design. The book's detailed, intimate awareness beautifully evokes Newfoundland and expands to our worldwide cultural moment. Burton applies a critique of how we live while embracing life with tenderness and humour. For all the fate, traditional limitation, labour, bitter recognition that chores contain, perhaps the deepest desire of *Chores* is to fulfill its glimpses of hope beyond mere acceptance: "the old harbour was chock solid with seals // and harpoons and I now believe / with all my heart the stirring is true..."



**GRIFFIN POETRY PRIZE**