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Inside Report

BROUGHT TO YOU TWICE WEEKLY BY THE EDITORS OF Q&Q

Sawai, Nikiforuk, Brooks among GG winners

"I'm happy, I'm blessed, I'm all that stuff," Gloria Sawai told *Inside Report* yesterday. And with good reason: the 70-year-old author has won the Governor General's Literary Award in the fiction category for her debut collection of short stories, *A Song for Nettie Johnson*.

Sawai was one of seven English-language winners named today by the Canada Council for the Arts. Among the others are Calgary journalist and author Andrew Nikiforuk, who won the non-fiction prize for *Saboteurs*, his book about Alberta anti-oil activist Wiebo Ludwig, and Winnipeg children's author Martha Brooks, who won in the children's text category for *True Confessions of a Heartless Girl*. The [full list of winners](#) (both English and French) appears below.

Each winning author will receive a cheque for \$15,000, while their publisher will get a \$3,000 Canada Council grant to help promote the winning title. (BMO Financial Group also helps to sponsor the prizes.) "We expect that there are going to be requests" for Sawai appearances, said Nik Burton, managing editor at her publisher, Regina-based Coteau Books.

Macfarlane Walter & Ross is celebrating a company first with the win for *Saboteurs*, which was released in hardcover in October 2001 and in trade paper last month. "We have quite a good quantity out there – we usually print for two years," says president Jan Walter, who adds that "we're hoping that there will be a renewed media interest."

Sawai's win, meanwhile, should provide a boost to Coteau, which has gone back to press for 5,000 fresh copies with a new cover design. (The book's initial print run, in October 2001, was 1,500 copies.) Sawai has been renowned for years for the short story "The Day I Sat with Jesus on the Sundeck and a Wind Came Up and Blew My Kimono Open and He Saw My Breasts," which appears in *A Song for Nettie Johnson*.

Both *Saboteurs* and *A Song for Nettie Johnson* have won awards before. Nikiforuk won the Arthur Ellis Award in the true crime category and the W.O. Mitchell City of Calgary Book Prize, while Sawai's collection won two Writers Guild of Alberta Awards, the City of Edmonton Book Award, and the Danuta Gleed Award. "This is the ultimate," says Sawai of her GG win. Nikiforuk is similarly appreciative: "The recognition is very sweet," he says.

Currently Sawai is working on a collection of three novellas, but has not signed with a publisher. "This is not coming in the near future," she says. "It

takes me a while to write something.” A profile of Sawai appears in the December issue of *Q&Q*.

Governor General Adrienne Clarkson will present the awards at Rideau Hall on Nov. 19; on the following evening the National Library of Canada will host a gala reading featuring the winners. *Derek Weiler*

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Governor General’s Literary Award winners 2002

Fiction

- English: *A Song for Nettie Johnson* by Gloria Sawai (Coteau Books)
- French: *La Gloire de Cassiodore* by Monique LaRue (Les Éditions du Boréal)

Non-fiction

- English: *Saboteurs: Wiebo Ludwig’s War Against Big Oil* by Andrew Nikiforuk (Macfarlane Walter & Ross)
- French: *Mark Twain et la parole noire* by Judith Lavoie (Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal)

Children’s literature, text

- English: *True Confessions of a Heartless Girl* by Martha Brooks (Groundwood Books)
- French: *L’oiseau de passage* by Hélène Vachon (Dominique et compagnie)

Children’s literature, illustration

- English: *Alphabeasts*, written and illustrated by Wallace Edwards (Kids Can Press)
- French: *Le grand voyage de Monsieur*, illustrated by Luc Melanson and written by Gilles Tibo (Dominique et compagnie)

Poetry

- English: *Surrender* by Roy Miki (The Mercury Press)
- French: *Humains paysages en temps de paix relative* by Robert Dickson (Éditions Prise de parole)

Drama

- English: *Unity (1918)* by Kevin Kerr (Talonbooks)
- French: *Le Langue-à-Langue des chiens de roche* by Daniel Danis (L’Arche Éditeur)

Translation

- French to English: *Thunder and Light* (House of Anansi Press), translated by Nigel Spencer from *Dans la foudre et la lumière* by Marie-Claire Blais (Les Éditions du Boréal)
- English to French: *Histoire universelle de la chasteté et du célibat* (Éditions Fides), translated by Paule Pierre-Noyart from *A History of Celibacy* by Elizabeth Abbott (HarperCollins Canada)

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Details on Stoddart author funding still to come

Former Stoddart Publishing authors will have to wait a bit longer for emergency funding announced last month by Canadian Heritage Minister Sheila Copps.

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Details on the administration of the funding are still being worked out by the Department of Canadian Heritage, The Writers' Union of Canada, and the Writers' Trust. Writers' Union executive director Deborah Windsor said Friday that an "impartial committee" is being devised to administer the funding. The committee should be up and running in about two weeks, said Windsor, and details on funding applications and guidelines will be available at that time. *Paul Spendlove*

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Social justice guidebook goes self-publishing route for new edition

The creators of a guidebook on corporate responsibility are self-publishing the book's third edition.

Previous editions of Paul Pellizzari's *Conscious Consumption* had been published by Wiley Canada and Broadview Press, and Stoddart Publishing had planned to publish the third. But Toronto-based research firm EthicScan, where Pellizzari is an editor and research director, will issue the book itself this week.

Conscious Consumption, a guidebook on corporate social responsibility in the food and beverage industry, will be distributed in-house and through Books for Business and Libra Information Services. The retailer discount for returnable sales is 20% to 30%, and for non-returnable sales 30% to 55%. EthicScan publisher and president David Nitkin believes the company will sell half of the copies online through its own web site, adding that the book's print run is less than 5,000 copies. EthicScan's target markets are unions, not-for-profit organizations, and teachers, though Nitkin hopes the book will also appeal to socially responsible consumers.

Previous editions of *Conscious Consumption* were published by John Wiley & Sons Canada in 1996 and Broadview Press in 1992. Although Stoddart had listed a third edition in a 1998 catalogue, it had never signed a contract, and the company eventually abandoned the project, says Nitkin.

This year's version includes 80 reports on companies from Coca-Cola to E.D. Smith, grading the firms on areas such as employee relations and environmental responsibility. Nitkin is banking on EthicScan's strong presence in the social justice community for the guidebook's continued success. "We have enough credibility to not rely on a mainstream publisher," he says, adding that the 1996 version sold 10,000 copies. To beef up its publicity campaign this year, EthicScan has sought coverage in *The Globe and Mail* and organized a reading at the Leftwords book festival in Toronto. *David Silverberg*

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Montreal joins transit poetry cities

Montreal is the latest Canadian city to bring poetry promotion to public transportation. La poésie prend le Métro, funded by the City of Montreal and the Canada Council for the Arts, launched last week.

Ninety-six poems will be displayed on the electronic noticeboards on

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Montreal's metro cars. More than a dozen Canadian cities have already launched similar programs in recent years. Gordon Platt of the Canada Council says that with Montreal's inclusion, poetry is on view to five-million transit riders across Canada.

Begun in 1997 in Vancouver, the poetry-in-transit project has spread to such cities as Toronto, Calgary, St. John's, Guelph, and – most recently before Montreal – Whitehorse. Platt says several more cities are considering joining the program, but nothing definite has been confirmed. *David Silverberg*

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Irving Oil sponsors kids' writing contest

A TD Canadian Children's Book Week writing contest for children has a new backer this year.

Imperial Oil is the new sponsor of the seven-year-old contest, organized by the Canadian Children's Book Centre. Five winners were announced last week; more than 200 children across Canada from Grades 2 through 7 submitted stories or poems, with one winner per grade.

The oil giant has helped sponsor Canadian Children's Book Week (which ran this year from Nov. 2-9) since 1999, but this is the first time it has been tied to the writing contest, said Helena Aalto, interim executive director for the Canadian Children's Book Centre. Winners received a \$200 gift certificate to the bookstore of their choice. *Paul Spendlove*

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Advance review: Lost Province

The following review of Stephen Henighan's Lost Province: Adventures in a Moldovan Family – to be published this month by Beach Holme Publishing – will appear in the December issue of Q&Q.

You would be correct to assume that the Soviet Union crumbled back in 1991 – sort of. Though most of the statues of Lenin have disappeared, the desperation and economic hopelessness that characterized life for many citizens under the Soviets is still alive, and this grim reality is painted in vivid shades of grey by Stephen Henighan in *Lost Province*.

Henighan lived with the Lençuta family in the capital city of Chisinau while teaching English in the former Soviet republic of Moldova in 1994. Moldova is a small country wedged between Romania on the west and Ukraine to the east. The history of the country is a sad tale of Russian colonialism, Romanian nationalism, and language laws manipulated by opportunistic politicians. Henighan, who schooled himself in Romanian before his trip, discovers a sort of cultural purgatory in Moldova, which was part of Romania until becoming a Soviet republic in 1940.

The Lençutas take Henighan in and he quickly feels loved by the family, but also suffocated by the lack of personal space. He takes walks just to escape and discovers a surreal world that democracy and the modern world have largely passed by.

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Henighan describes vast numbers of young, unemployed Moldovan men prowling the city in track suits and sandals, looking for an escape from boredom and facing a bleak future – that is when they’re not watching MTV and being seduced by the unattainable riches of the West. Many wind up in dubious business schemes, fall into alcohol abuse and petty theft, or worse, join the Russian mafia, seemingly the only beneficiary of Eastern Europe’s ruthless new economic “openness.” The women don’t fare much better, working at low-paying, menial jobs or exported by the mafia to work as prostitutes in other parts of Europe.

Lost Province is often a bleak book, but Henighan’s analysis and personal portraits shine needed light into the dark corners of post-Soviet Eastern Europe. Moldovans are rejecting their own history and culture, and those around them – even their former compatriots in Romania – are following suit. – *Stephen Knight*, associate editor of Canadian Hockey Magazine

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Note: Because of the Remembrance Day statutory holiday in some provinces, the fiction and non-fiction bestseller listings will appear in the next Inside Report.

NEWS EDITOR:

Derek Weiler, (416) 360-0044
ext. 339; dweiler@quillandquire.com

STAFF WRITER:

Paul Spendlove, (416) 360-0044
ext. 355; pspendlove@quillandquire.com

INTERN:

David Silverberg, (416) 360-0044
ext. 375; dsilverberg@quillandquire.com

CORRESPONDENTS:

ALBERTA: Helen Metella,
hmetella@shaw.ca

MANITOBA: Charmagne de Veer,
char@autobahn.mb.ca

QUEBEC: Mary Soderstrom,
msoder@aei.ca

MARITIMES: Charles Mandel,
cmandel@islandtelecom.com

NEWFOUNDLAND: Janet McNaughton,
janetmcn@avint.net

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

416 360-0044 ext. 343;
subscriptions@quillandquire.com

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