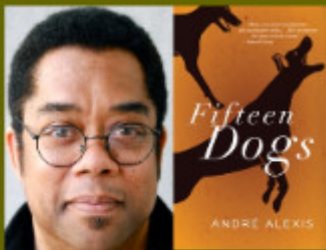


International Festival of Authors (IFOA) Hamilton

celebrates the books nominated for the \$25,000

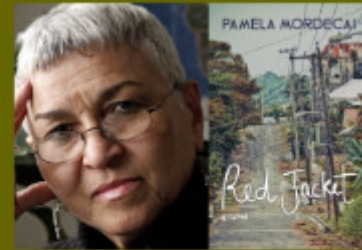
2015 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize



Andre Alexis
Fifteen Dogs



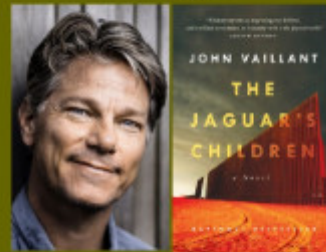
Elizabeth Hay
His Whole Life



Pamela Mordecai
Red Jacket



Russell Smith's *Confidence*
presented by actor,
John Fitzgerald Jay



John Vaillant's *The Jaguar's Children*
presented by guest author,
Claire Cameron

Thursday, October 29, 2015 at 7pm

Virtue-Fitzgerald Centre for the Arts

Hillfield Strathallan College

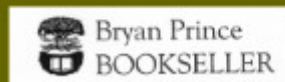
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International Festival of Authors (IFOA)

Hamilton

with the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize finalists

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***Fifteen Dogs* by André Alexis:**

Shortlisted for the 2015 Giller Prize

Shortlisted for the 2015 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize

It begins with a bet between the gods Hermes and Apollo: “that animals would be even more unhappy than humans are if they were given human intelligence.” This leads them to grant human consciousness and language to a group of dogs overnighing at a Toronto veterinary clinic. Suddenly capable of more complex thought, the pack is torn between those who resist the new ways of thinking and those who embrace the change. The gods watch from above as the dogs venture into their newly unfamiliar world, as they become divided among themselves, as each struggles with new thoughts and feelings. By turns meditative and devastating, charming and strange, André Alexis's contemporary take on the moral fable offers a compelling and affecting look at the beauty and perils of human consciousness.

André Alexis is a three-time finalist for The Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize, having previously been nominated for his novels *Childhood* and *Pastoral*. His other books include the novel *Asylum* and *Beauty & Sadness*, a collection of criticism. *Fifteen Dogs* was recently longlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize and shortlisted for the Toronto Book Award. Born in Trinidad and raised in Ottawa, Alexis lives in Toronto.

***His Whole Life* by Elizabeth Hay:**

Shortlisted for the 2015 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize

At the outset, ten-year-old Jim and his Canadian mother and American father are on a car journey from New York City to a lake in eastern Ontario during the last hot days of August. What follows is an enveloping story that spans a few pivotal years of his youth and sets out competing claims on

everyone's love: for Canada over New York; for a mother over a father; a friend over a husband; one son over another. Set in the mid-1990s when Quebec was on the verge of leaving Canada, *His Whole Life* probes the mystery of how members of a family can hurt each other so deeply, and remember those hurts in such detail, yet find openings that shock them with love and forgiveness.

Elizabeth Hay was previously nominated for The Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize in 1997 for her collection of stories *Small Change*. Her other works include *A Student of Weather*, *Garbo Laughs*, and *Late Nights on Air*. She is a past recipient of the Scotiabank Giller Prize, the Ottawa Book Award, and the Marian Engel Award, which she received in 2002. Hay lives in Ottawa.

***Red Jacket* by Pamela Mordecai**

Shortlisted for the 2015 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize

Growing up on the Caribbean island of St. Christopher in the late 1960s, Grace Carpenter wonders how it is that her extended family is black, while she has copper coloured skin, red hair, and grey eyes. Unkind people taunt her with names like "red jacket" Pamela Mordecai interweaves Grace's narrative with the personal histories of the mother who gave her up but never forgot her, and Jimmy Atule, a Jesuit whom she meets through her work fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic in West Africa. With his help, Grace completes her difficult journey away from the security of her loving home to find a place for herself in the wider world and confront the truth about her birth and the mystery of her true identity.

Pamela Mordecai has published five collections of poetry and an anthology of short fiction. *Red Jacket* is her debut novel. Her poems have been shortlisted for the Canada Writes CBC Poetry Prize and the Bridport Prize. She is the recipient of the Institute of Jamaica's Centenary and Bronze Musgrave Medals. Born in Jamaica, Mordecai lives in Kitchener, Ontario.

***Confidence* by Russell Smith:**

Shortlisted for the 2015 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize

Ecstasy-taking PhD students, financial traders desperate for husbands, and experimental filmmakers who record every second of their day, populate the eight short stories in *Confidence*. Whether in private clubs, crowded restaurants, psychiatric wards, or their own living room, every character has a secret of some kind. Russell Smith displays a satirical sensibility as he plumbs the psyches of individuals confronting displacement from the limelight through shifting fashion, mounting financial pressure, or the reality of aging. Rarely have the lives of the urban hip been

chronicled with such knowing empathy and humour.

Russell Smith was previously nominated for this prize in 2005 for his novel *Muriella Pent*. He is the author of 10 books, including the novels *How Insensitive* and *Girl Crazy*. Smith writes a weekly column on the arts for *The Globe and Mail* and teaches in the MFA program at the University of Guelph. *Confidence* was longlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize earlier this month. He lives in Toronto.

John Fitzgerald Jay (Canada) is a graduate of the Dalhousie University Theatre program and has performed in theatres around the world. Notably at Theatre des Bouffes de Nords in Paris, The Royal National Theatre in London, and in London's West End. Teatro de la Abadía in Madrid, the MET in Kansas City, Quantum Theatre in Pittsburgh, The National Arts Centre in Ottawa, The Canadian Stage company and Souleppper Theatre in Toronto, to name a few. He co founded 404Strand Theatre in Pittsburgh, is the owner of a men's fashion accessories company called Hook and Furl, and created the The Cobourg Bar in Toronto. John is reading from *Confidence* for Russell Smith in IFOA Hamilton. John has known Russell Smith since they were four years old.

***The Jaguar's Children* by John Vaillant**

Shortlisted for the 2015 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize

Hector, a young Mexican fleeing his homeland for a better life in the U.S., pays to be sealed inside the empty tank of a water truck with other illegal migrants. Abandoned by smugglers in the desert and left to die, their only lifeline is a single phone. As time slips away, Hector reveals what has brought him to this moment, taking us back to an older Mexico – its rich culture, its rapid change – and exposes the tangled ties between Mexico and El Norte. Hector fights to ensure his message makes it out of the truck and into the world. An arresting window into the relationship between two cultures and gripping survival story of a young man trapped, perhaps fatally, during a border crossing.

John Vaillant won the Pearson Writers' Trust Nonfiction Prize for his first book of nonfiction, *The Golden Spruce*. He is a past recipient of the Governor General's Literary Award, the BC National Award for Canadian Nonfiction, and the Windham-Campbell Literature Prize. His work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, and *The Walrus*, among others. *The Jaguar's Children* is his first novel. Vaillant lives in Vancouver.

Claire Cameron's novel, *The Bear*, tells the story of two young siblings who are left to fend for themselves in the wilderness of Northern Ontario when a black bear attacks their campsite, killing

both of their parents. It is a number 1 bestseller in Canada, was long listed for the Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction and will be translated into 5 languages and the film rights are optioned. Her writing has appeared in The New York Times, The Globe and Mail, National Post and The Millions. Cameron is presenting on behalf of John Vaillant at IFOA Hamilton.

The Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize recognizes Canadian writers of exceptional talent for the year's best novel or short-story collection as selected by a three-member, independent judging panel. The 2015 winner will be announced on November 3 at the [Writers' Trust Awards](#).

Literacy on Tour (Lit On Tour) is a programme that aims to present literary events to a wide range of communities outside of Toronto. One of the main initiatives of Lit On Tour is the International Festival of Authors' touring programme. [IFOA Ontario](#).



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