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SMITH, VARON, AND MACKINNON RECEIVE 2014 LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA LITERARY AWARDS

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(Richmond, Virginia) – The Library of Virginia is pleased to announce the winners of the 17th Annual Library of Virginia Literary Awards, sponsored by Dominion. The October 18 awards celebration was hosted by award-winning Virginia author Adriana Trigiani. Awards categories were fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and literary lifetime achievement. Winners of the Library of Virginia’s Annual Literary Awards receive a monetary prize and a handsome engraved crystal book.

Lee Smith is the recipient of the **2014 Emyl Jenkins Sexton Literary Award for Fiction** for *Guests on Earth*, which the judges felt explores the interplay of talent, beauty, character, and illness in the lives of a fascinating spectrum of Southern women. Set at the Asheville, North Carolina, hospital where Zelda Fitzgerald and eight others perished in a tragic fire in 1948, Smith’s *Guests on Earth* is “ambitious and utterly charming,” according to the judges.

Smith grew up in Grundy, located in the Appalachian Mountains of southwestern Virginia. She spent her last two years of high school at St. Catherine’s School in Richmond and attended Hollins College. Since 1968 she has published 13 novels and four collections of short stories, and has received a host of awards including recognition by the Library of Virginia as recipient of the 2010 Literary Lifetime Achievement Award.

The other finalists for the fiction prize were: *The Last First Day* by Carrie Brown and *River of Dust* by Virginia Pye. The judges praised Brown for an exquisitely written story of a woman’s life in its twilight, looking back on a harrowing childhood and on the unaccountable love and happiness that emerged from it. Pye’s book, set on the windswept plains of northwestern China in 1910, was judged a remarkable first novel with a deep resonance for the human condition.

The judges also recognized *Seeing Red* by Kathryn Erskine as honorable mention in the fiction category. Written as a young adult novel but with appeal to all ages, *Seeing Red* is a powerful story of family, friendship, and race relations in the rural south.

The winner of the **2014 Literary Award for Nonfiction** is **Elizabeth Varon** for *Appomattox: Victory, Defeat, and Freedom at the End of the Civil War*, which deftly narrates the moment the Civil War ended with Lee’s surrender to Grant at Appomattox Court House. The judges felt that Varon expertly traces the shock as news of the surrender spread and spawned a three-way American debate over the meaning of the war that still reverberates today.

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LVA Literary Awards/Page Two

Varon, the Langbourne M. Williams Professor of American History at the University of Virginia, is a noted Civil War historian. Her previous works include *Disunion!: The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789–1859*; *We Mean to Be Counted: White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia*; and *Southern Lady, Yankee Spy: The True Story of Elizabeth Van Lew, A Union Agent in the Heart of the Confederacy*.

The other nonfiction finalists were: *Rose Kennedy: The Life and Times of a Political Matriarch* by Barbara Perry and *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772–1832* by Alan Taylor. The judges felt that Perry's use of newly released materials added nuance and detail to her depiction of Rose Kennedy. Alan Taylor's *Internal Enemy*, which examines the escape and emancipation of Chesapeake slaves during the War of 1812, was praised by the judges as "an extraordinary story told in vivid prose and compelling detail."

Margaret Mackinnon won the **2014 Literary Award for Poetry** for *The Invented Child*. The judges praised Mackinnon's fearless approach to an enormous variety of subjects, many of them prompted by photographs and art. They felt that *Invented Child* reveals a reverence for the natural world and palpably natural imagery as it conveys vast emotions with quietly learned allusion.

The Invented Child is Mackinnon's debut collection of poems. Her work has appeared in *Image, Poetry, New England Review, Georgia Review, Quarterly West, RHINO, Valparaiso Poetry Review, Poet Lore*, and other publications. She completed the graduate program in creative writing at the University of Florida. Her awards include the Richard Eberhart Poetry Prize from Florida State University, a Tennessee Williams Scholarship from the Sewanee Writers' Conference, and the Graybeal-Gowen Poetry Prize from *Shenandoah* and Washington and Lee University. She lives in Falls Church.

The other poetry prize finalists were *Elegy Owed* by Bob Hicok and *The Red Wolf: A Dream of Flannery O'Connor* by R.T. Smith. The judges called *Elegy Owed* bold, inventive, and often playful while invoking serious themes with ebullience and conscience. *The Red Wolf* was cited for embracing an autobiographical stance without sanctimony in a new kind of comedy of errors as a projected backstory to the career of Flannery O'Connor in this often-hilarious re-creation of her world in Georgia.

The winners of the **People's Choice Awards** are *King and Maxwell* by **David Baldacci** in the fiction category and *The Feud: The Hatfields and McCoys, The True Story* by **Dean King** in the nonfiction category. Winners are chosen by readers voting online and in libraries.

Rita Dove, Commonwealth Professor of English at the University of Virginia, is the recipient of the **2014 Carole Weinstein Prize in Poetry**. Established in 2005, the prize is awarded each year to a poet with strong connections to the commonwealth of Virginia. The \$10,000 annual prize recognizes significant recent contribution to the art of poetry and is awarded on the basis of a range of achievement in the field of poetry. Dove has served as Poet Laureate of the United States and consultant to the Library of Congress and as Poet Laureate of Virginia. She holds honorary doctoral degrees from more than 20 American universities. She has won the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry and numerous other literary awards and honors, including the Library of Virginia's 2008 Literary Lifetime Achievement Award.

The recipient of the 2014 Library of Virginia **Literary Lifetime Achievement Award** is **Barbara Kingsolver**. She is the author of best-selling novels, nonfiction, and poetry, and is a freelance journalist and political activist.

LVA Literary Awards/Page Three

Born in 1955, Kingsolver grew up in rural Kentucky and earned degrees in biology from DePauw University and the University of Arizona. She has lived in England, France, and the Canary Islands, and worked in Europe, Africa, Asia, Mexico, and South America. Kingsolver has lived in Southwest Virginia fulltime for ten years and in the summers for ten years before that. She and her family live on a farm and raise vegetables and Icelandic sheep.

She is the author of 14 books, including *The Bean Trees*; *Homeland*; *The Poisonwood Bible* (a finalist for both the Pulitzer Prize and the Orange Prize); *Pigs in Heaven*; *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* (winner of the James Beard Award); *The Lacuna* (winner of the 2010 Emyl Jenkins Sexton Literary Award for Fiction); and *Flight Behavior*. In 2000, Kingsolver received the National Humanities Medal, our country's highest honor for service through the arts. Kingsolver established the Bellwether Prize in 1998 (now the PEN/Bellwether Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction) to promote fiction that addresses issues of social justice and the impact of culture and politics on human relationships.

The second **Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn Kotz Award** went to ***The Embrace: Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo*** by **Carolyn Kreiter-Foronda**. This award is presented in partnership with the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. This award is presented in partnership with the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and was given to Kreiter-Foronda last night at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. This unique award recognizes an outstanding book that demonstrates the highest literary merit as a creative or scholarly work on the theme of visual artists or art. An eligible book may be a work of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, or a museum catalog, published in English by an American publisher.

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