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Weil, Schulte, and Scafidi Receive 2015 Library of Virginia Literary Awards

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The Library of Virginia is pleased to announce the winners of the 18th Annual Library of Virginia Literary Awards, sponsored by Dominion. The October 17 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 \$2,500 prize and an engraved crystal book.

Josh Weil is the recipient of the **Literary Award for Fiction** for *The Great Glass Sea*, which the judges felt was ambitious, sprawling, and lyrical. A novel about sibling love and rivalry as well as hubris, Weil's emotional tale weaves folklore with the future in an entirely believable fashion.

A *New York Times* Editor's Choice, *The Great Glass Sea* won the GrubStreet National Book Prize, was shortlisted for the Center for Fiction's Flaherty-Dunnann First Novel Prize, and was selected for Powell's Book's IndieSpensible program. Weil's 2009 book *The New Valley* (also a *New York Times* Editor's Choice) won the Sue Kaufman Prize for First Fiction from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the New Writers Award from the GLCA (Great Lakes College Association), and a "5 Under 35" Award from the National Book Foundation. Born in the Appalachian mountains of Southwest Virginia, Weil currently lives with his family in the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas.

The other finalists for the fiction prize were *A Kind of Dream: Stories* by Kelly Cherry and *What Is Visible* by Kimberly Elkins. *A Kind of Dream* is a beautiful, imaginative novel-in-stories that explores a wide range of emotions—from despair to ecstasy—in the context of family, relationships, and creativity. *What Is Visible* reimagines historical people and events in a fully realized fiction tale. Elkins brings her characters alive on the page in a way our history books never can, by finding their souls.

The **winner** of the **2015 Literary Award for Nonfiction** is **Brigid Schulte** for *Overwhelmed: Work, Love,*

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and Play When No One Has the Time. Deeply researched, *Overwhelmed* explains, with candor and occasional hilarity, how time pressure and stress are reshaping our brains, our workplaces, our relationships—and denying us those elusive moments of leisure which the ancient Greeks celebrated as the point of living a good life.

Schulte was an award-winning journalist for the *Washington Post* and the *Washington Post Magazine* and part of the team that won the 2008 Pulitzer Prize. She now serves as the founding director of the Good Life Initiative at the nonpartisan think tank New America and director of the Breadwinning and Caregiving program, both of which seek to elevate the conversation, explore transformative solutions, and highlight how work-life issues are the key to excellence, productivity, and innovation, as well as a full, authentic, and meaningful life. She lives in Alexandria, Virginia, with her husband and their two children. She grew up in Portland, Oregon, and spent her summers with family in Wyoming, where she did not feel overwhelmed.

The other nonfiction finalists were *Give War and Peace a Chance: Tolstoyan Wisdom for Troubled Times* by Andrew Kaufman and *The Road to Black Ned's Forge: A Story of Race, Sex, and Trade on the Colonial American Frontier* by Turk McClesky. *Give War and Peace a Chance* celebrates the novel hailed as one of the greatest ever written, but a book whose 1,500-page length makes it one of the most intimidating. Kaufman's guide to the setting, characters, and background of the epic novel—skillfully interwoven with events in Tolstoy's life—presents an entertaining and thought-provoking case for why *War and Peace* is more relevant than ever. *The Road to Black Ned's Forge* tells the remarkable story of Edward Tarr, the first free-black landowner west of the Blue Ridge. It unlocks a new and complex understanding of race relations on the American frontier. McClesky radically rewrites the history of America's 18th-century backcountry as a world of close-knit, rigorously governed communities.

Steve Scafidi, a carpenter who has taught most recently in the writing seminars at Johns Hopkins University, is the **winner of the 2015 Literary Award for Poetry** for *The Cabinetmaker's Window*. In visceral language inspired by his own work as a cabinetmaker, Scafidi's poems display both the tenuous and the everlasting nature of existence—whether the dissolution of a household, the fragility of shelter, or the rediscovery of new life coming from the old—with a breadth of language that transcends walnut boards, oak spindles, and the sharpening of chisels.

Scafidi is also the author of *Sparks from a Nine-Pound Hammer*, *For Love of Common Words*, *To the Bramble and the Briar*, and a chapbook, *Songs for the Carry-On*. He has won the Larry Levis Reading Prize, the James Boatwright Prize, and the Miller Williams Prize. He works as a cabinetmaker and lives with his family in Summit Point, West Virginia.

The other finalists for the poetry prize were *Spans: New and Selected Poems* by Elizabeth Seydel Morgan and *Sweet Husk* by Corrie Williamson. *Spans*, Morgan's collection of new and selected poems, is written with mastery, wit, and a touch of melancholy. The poems reveal poignant complexities in events as seemingly predictable as the changing of the seasons or a visit to an art museum. The arresting poems in *Sweet Husk*, the debut collection by Corrie Williamson, depict worlds within worlds from multiple perspectives—the anthropologist of imagination, archeologist of the heart, and the observant naturalist for whom a husk may seem empty but whose husking can reveal essential things.

The judges also selected an honorable mention in the poetry category: *What the Neighbors Know* by Melanie McCabe.

The **winners of the People's Choice Awards** are *The Good, The Bad, and the Emus* by **Donna Andrews** in the **fiction category** and *Factory Man: How One Furniture Maker Battled Offshoring, Stayed Local –and Helped Save an American Town* by **Beth Macy** in the **nonfiction category**. The finalists for the People's Choice Awards are selected by a panel of independent Virginia booksellers and librarians. Winners are decided by readers voting online. Winners of the People's Choice awards receive \$2,500 and an engraved crystal book.

Also honored at this year's Literary Awards as the **winner** of the **Art in Literature: Mary Lynn Kotz Award** was *Lisette's List* by *New York Times* best-selling author **Susan Vreeland**. The Art in Literature prize is awarded jointly by the Library of Virginia and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

Joshua Poteat was the recipient of the **2015 Carole Weinstein Poetry Prize**, which is awarded each year to a poet with strong connections to 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. There is no formal application process or competition.

The recipient of the **2015 Library of Virginia Literary Lifetime Achievement Award** is Albemarle County resident **Jan Karon**, author of the best-selling series of ten Mitford novels featuring Father Timothy Kavanagh, an Episcopal priest, and the fictional village of Mitford.

Next year's Literary Awards Celebration will be held on October 15, 2016.

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