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Wojahn, Perry, and Mundy Receive Literary Awards 2018 recipients honored at the Library of Virginia

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(Richmond, Virginia) – The Library of Virginia is pleased to announce the winners of the 21st Annual Library of Virginia Literary Awards, sponsored by Dominion Energy. The October 20 awards celebration was hosted by best-selling author and award-winning filmmaker Adriana Trigiani. Awards categories were poetry, nonfiction, and fiction; People's Choice Awards for fiction and nonfiction; and Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn Kotz Award. Winners in each category receive a monetary prize and a handsome engraved crystal book.

David Wojahn is the recipient of the 2018 Literary Award for Poetry for his book *For the Scribe*, which the judges described as “an ambitious and poignantly moving exploration of the fissures between public and private, historical and personal.”

Wojahn is the author of *Spirit Cabinet*, *The Falling Hour*, *Late Empire*, *Mystery Train*, *Glassworks*, *Icehouse Lights*, *Interrogation Palace* (a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize), and *World Tree* (winner of the Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize and the Poet's Prize). He is the recipient of four Pushcart Prizes, the William Carlos Williams Book Award, the Carole Weinstein Poetry Prize, the George Kent Memorial Prize, and the O. B. Hardison Jr. Poetry Prize, among other honors. He has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. Wojahn is a professor of English at Virginia Commonwealth University and also teaches in the MFA in Writing Program of the Vermont College of Fine Arts.

The other finalists for the poetry prize were Remica Bingham-Risher for *Starlight & Error* and Lisa Russ Spaar for *Orexia*. An honorable mention was awarded to Wendell Hawken for *White Bird: A Sequence*.

The winner of the **2018 Literary Award for Nonfiction** is **Liza Mundy** for her book *Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers of World War II*, which “deftly conveys both the complexities of their puzzle-solving and the emotional dramas of their experiences at a time when women were not encouraged to have careers,” according to the judges.

Mundy, a former staff writer for the *Washington Post*, is the author of four books. *The Richer Sex* was named one of the top nonfiction books of 2012 by the *Washington Post* and a noteworthy book by the *New York Times Book Review*. *Michelle*, a biography of First Lady Michelle Obama, was a *New York Times* best seller. *Everything Conceivable* received the 2008 Science in Society Award from the National Association of Science Writers. She writes widely for publications including *The Atlantic*, *Politico*, *New*

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York Times, *Slate*, and *Time*. A senior fellow at New America, a nonpartisan think tank, Mundy has an AB from Princeton University and an MA in English literature from the University of Virginia. She lives in Arlington, with her family.

The other finalists for the nonfiction prize were Donna M. Lucey for *Sargent's Women: Four Lives Behind the Canvas* and Douglas Winiarski for *Darkness Falls on the Land of Light: Experiencing Religious Awakenings in Eighteenth-Century New England*.

Janet Peery won the **2018 Emyl Jenkins Sexton Literary Award for Fiction** for her book *The Exact Nature of Our Wrongs: A Novel*, the story of one family's struggle with addiction. The judges cited Perry's work as "character-driven literature by a master at the height of her power."

Peery is the author of four books of fiction and numerous short stories. A finalist for the National Book Award in Fiction (1996), she received the Library of Virginia Literary Award for Fiction (2008) and the WILLA Award for Literary Fiction (2008) from Women Writing the West. She is the recipient of the Whiting Writers Award, the Richard and Hinda Rosenthal Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. In 2002 she earned an Outstanding Faculty Award from the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia and in 2005 was honored by Old Dominion University with the distinction of University Professor. She lives on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.

The other finalists for the fiction award were James Minick for *Fire Is Your Water* and Leah Weiss for *If the Creek Don't Rise*.

The winners of the **People's Choice Awards** are *Say Nothing* by **Brad Parks** in the fiction category and *Code Girls: The Untold Story of the American Women Code Breakers of World War II* by **Liza Mundy** in the nonfiction category. Winners are chosen by online voting.

The **Art in Literature: The Mary Lynn Kotz Award** went to **Donna M. Lucey** for her book *Sargent's Women: Four Lives Behind the Canvas*, the story of four extraordinary women painted by the iconic high-society portraitist John Singer Sargent. Presented by the Library and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Art in Literature Award recognizes an outstanding book published in the previous year that is written primarily in response to a work (or works) of art while also showing the highest literary quality as a creative or scholarly work. This unique award, established in 2013, is named in honor of Mary Lynn Kotz, author of the award-winning biography *Rauschenberg: A Life*.

Next year's Literary Awards Celebration will be held on October 19, 2019.

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October 15, 2018