

2020 Gerald Lampert Memorial Award Shortlist

Float and Scurry by Heather Birrell (Anvil Press/A Feed Dog Book)

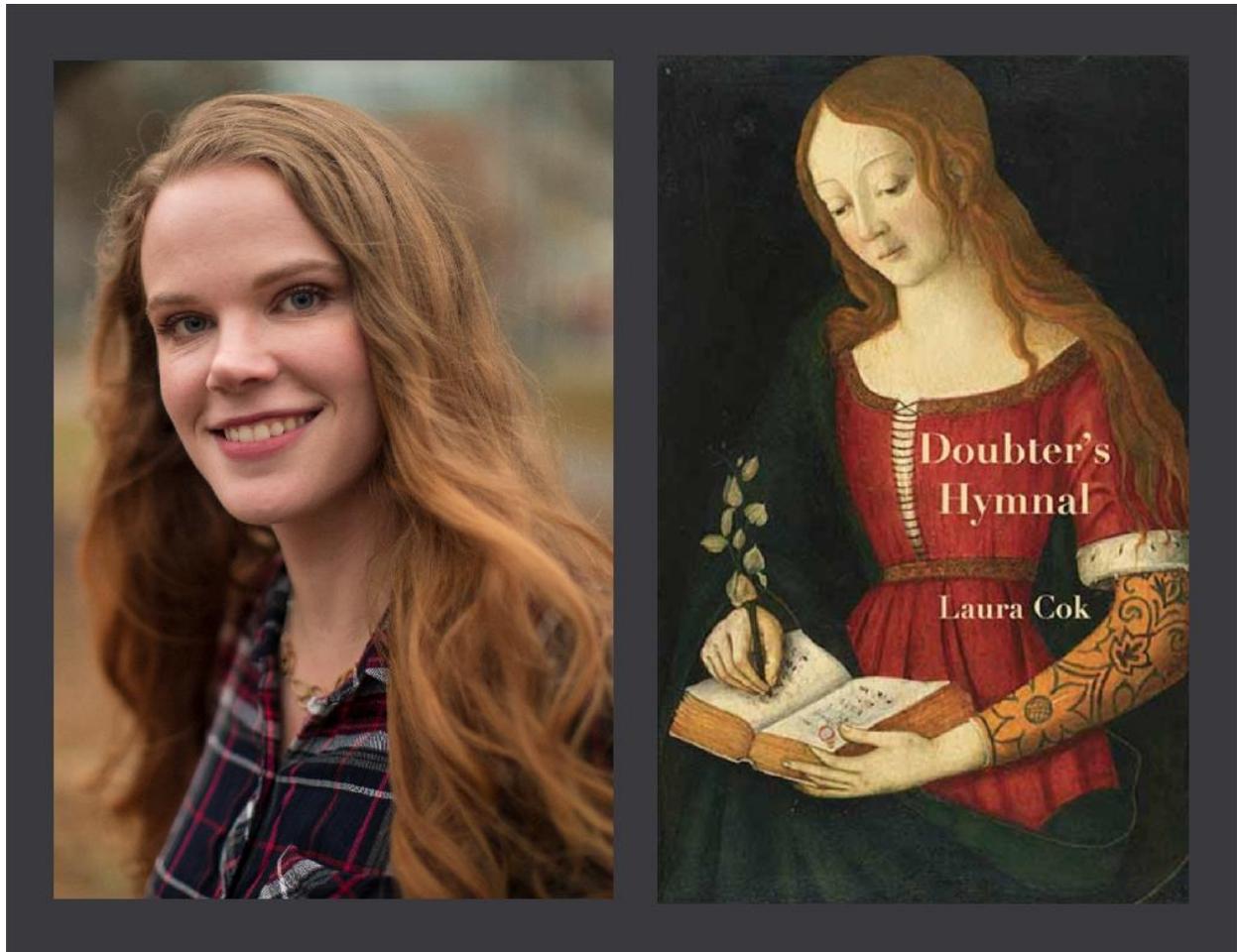
Heather Birrell is the author of two short story collections: *Mad Hope* (Coach House Books, 2012) and *I know you are but what am I?* (Coach House Books, 2004). Her stories have been shortlisted for both the Western and National Magazine Awards and have appeared in numerous Canadian literary journals. A frequent book reviewer and winner of the Journey Prize, she also works as a high school teacher and a creative writing instructor.



From the Jurors: In the rapid-fire collection *Float and Scurry*, Heather Birrell tackles parenting, patriarchy, personal politics and much more, often while driving the reader to laughter. So many of this book's subjects and projects are notoriously difficult to write in a way that is engaging: meditations on modern technology, extended dream sequences, notes towards an unwritten novel. Like a champion roller-skater, Birrell makes each near-impossible feat look effortless and entertaining. Every word soars, every moment works.

***Doubter's Hymnal* by Laura Cok (Mansfield Press)**

Laura Cok is a writer and editor based in Toronto, Ontario. Originally from Northern California, she has spent time in Grand Rapids, Michigan and Waterloo, Ontario before settling in Toronto. She holds an MA in English Literature from the University of Toronto, where she won the E.J. Pratt Poetry Medal and the University of Toronto Magazine alumni poetry contest. Her debut poetry collection, *Doubter's Hymnal*, was published in summer 2019 from Mansfield Press, and she recently won the League of Canadian Poets' 2020 Broadsheet Contest.

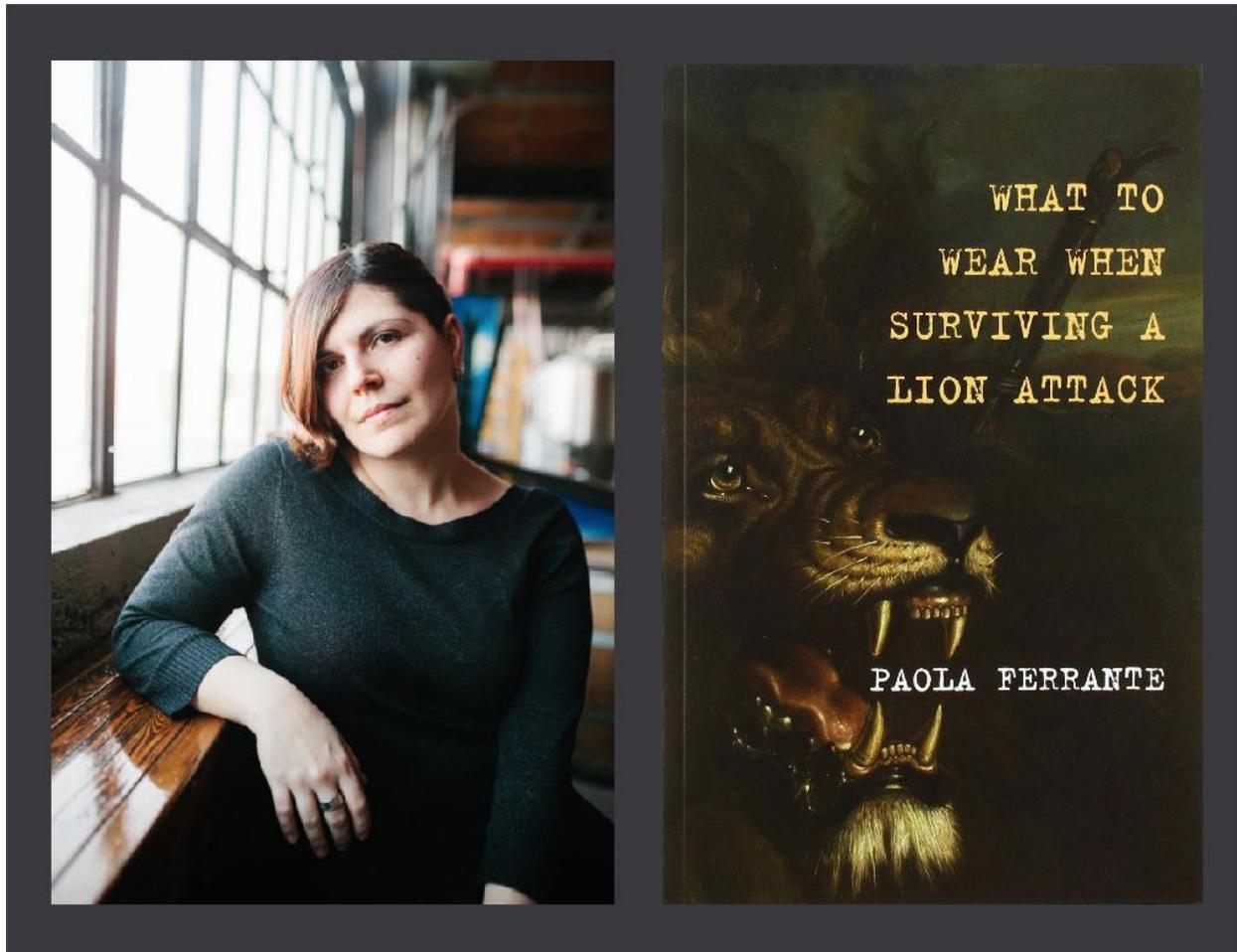


Author Photo: Mike Meehan

From the Jurors: The poems in Laura Cok's *Doubter's Hymnal* are refreshingly unpretentious. Facing off with the complications of faith within day-to-day life, these poems manage succinct lyricism with plain yet powerfully instinctive language. Here, the personal contains the ingredients of the universal, and invites the reader to see themselves more sharply, and yet compassionately, through the vulnerability of the speaker.

***What to Wear When Surviving A Lion Attack* by Paola Ferrante (Mansfield Press)**

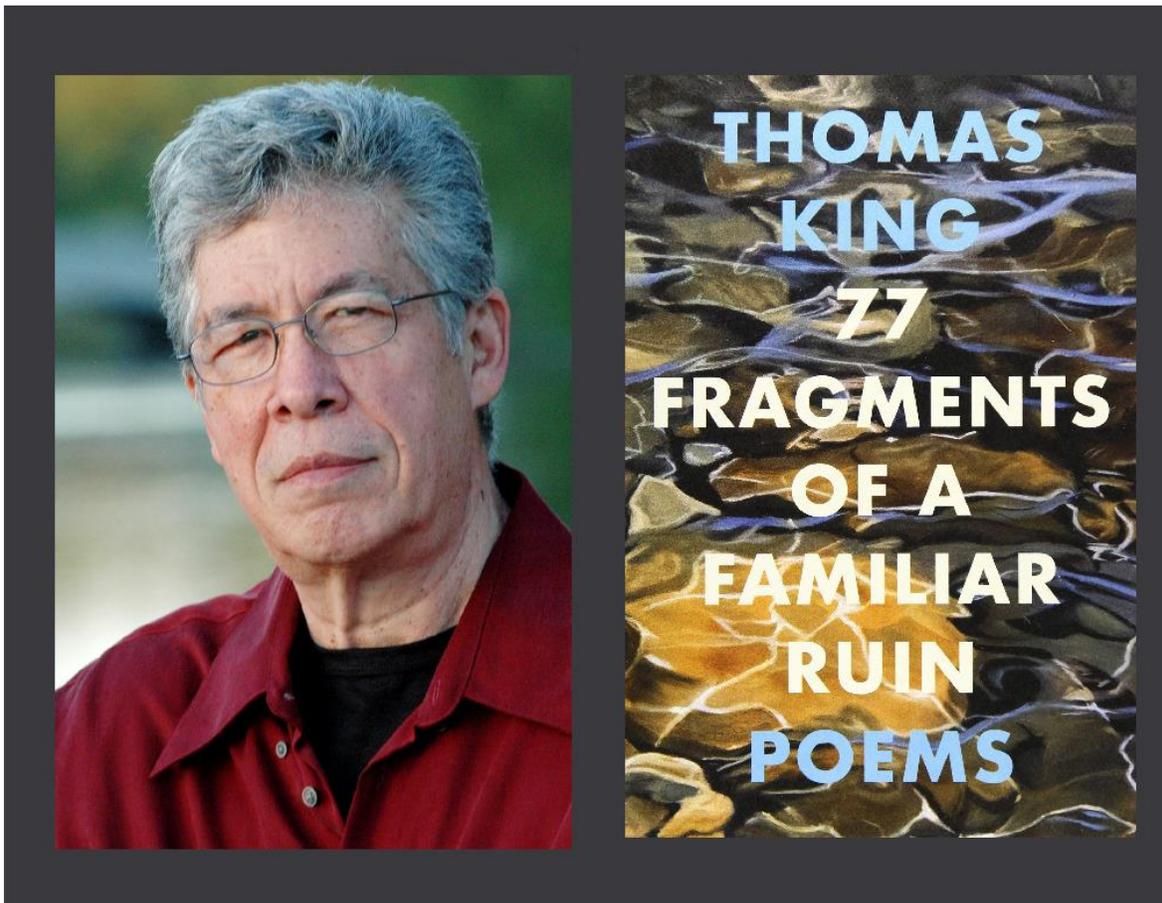
Paola Ferrante won *The New Quarterly's* 2019 Peter Hinchcliffe Fiction Award and *Room's* 2018 prize for Fiction, and was an Honorable Mention for *The North American Review's* 2020 Kurt Vonnegut prize. Her work has appeared, or is forthcoming in, *PRISM International*, *The Puritan*, *Grain*, *CV2*, *The Fiddlehead* and elsewhere. She is the Poetry Editor at *Minola Review* and resides in Toronto, Canada. Find Paola on Twitter at @PaolaOFerrante.



From the Jurors: Paola Ferrante's *What To Wear When Surviving A Lion Attack* exposes dark, brutal facts such as sexism against women in a patriarchal society. Through incisive and provoking narrative and sharp, dazzling animal images, Ferrante brilliantly applies psychology, horror films and folktales. They build connections and code break social, political and personal unsettling truths. Poems here are fine-crafted, authentic and profound. They demand readers' attention and deep reflection.

***77 Fragments of a Familiar Ruin* by Thomas King (HarperCollins Publishers)**

Thomas King is one of Canada's premier Native public intellectuals. King was the first Aboriginal person to deliver the prestigious Massey Lectures, and is also the bestselling, award-winning author of six novels, two collections of short stories and two nonfiction books. He won the 2014 Governor General's Award for Literature for his novel, *The Back of the Turtle*. His most recent novel is *Obsidian: A Dreadful Water Mystery*. His non-fiction tour de force, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America* won the BC National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction and the RBC Taylor Prize, as well as being a finalist for 2015 CBC Canada Reads. He is a recipient of the Order of Canada. He lives in Guelph, ON.



Author Photo: Lorenz Calcagno

From the Jurors: Thomas King's *77 Fragments of a Familiar Ruin* is a masterpiece with great humor and wisdom that discloses difficult historical, political and environmental problems through animals' dialogues. Here King weaves the current and historical life together with myths through his trademark wordplay and wit wryly and intricately. Fragments are pieced together as an ingenious eulogy and also as fascinating quarrels; each provokes philosophical and painful truth. This well-formed, exceptional book draws us to laugh, to mourn, and to contemplate with its open ending: "...we're going to have to start this story all over. Again."

***Re-Origin of Species* by Alessandra Naccarato (Book*hug Press)**

Alessandra Naccarato is the recipient of the 2015 RBC Bronwen Wallace Award for Emerging Writers and the winner of the 2017 CBC Poetry Prize. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of British Columbia, and is the Managing Editor of Write Bloody North Press. Her debut poetry collection, *Re-Origin of Species* (Book*hug, 2019) combines personal narrative and natural study to tell a story of adaptation and evolution, and was named a Best Book of 2019 by CBC Books.

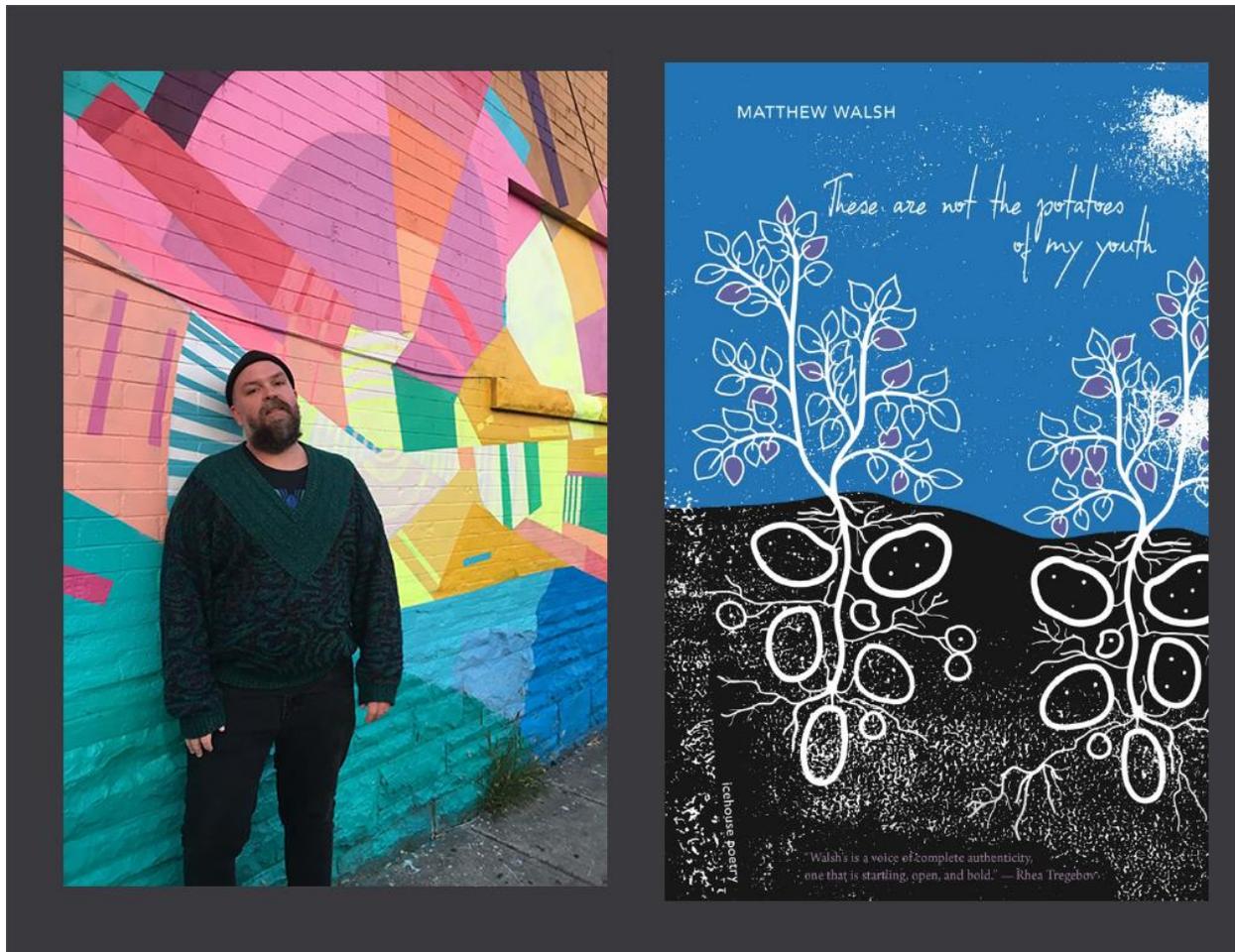


Author Photo: Jacklyn Atlas

From the Jurors: Alessandra Naccarato's *Re-Origin of Species* is masterfully crafted. The maturity of these poems is matched by the high-level operation of the themes they enact. Naccarato creates an ecosystem in which self, psyche, and external environment are understood as intrinsically inseparable. Each poem achieves that much sought-after combination of unexpected and inevitable, an indication of high-level functioning both in craft and creative thought. As comfortable in the darkness as in the light, this collection creates an honest beauty and imaginativeness that can't help but strike a chord, or several.

***These are not the potatoes of my youth* by Matthew Walsh (Goose Lane Editions)**

Matthew Walsh is a queer poet from Nova Scotia, Canada. Born in Halifax, they grew up just outside Musquodobit Harbour, along the eastern shore. Matthew Walsh completed an MFA at The University of British Columbia's Creative Writing program, where some of their poems were written. Their work can be found in *The Malahat Review*, *Plenitude*, *Train: A Journal*, and is forthcoming in *Pulp Literature*.



From the Jurors: *These are not the potatoes of my youth* is as bold, odd, fun, melancholic and mysterious as its wonderfully clunky title. Sometimes marching and sometimes mumbling, Matthew Walsh brings new emotional footing to every poem, surveying a wide range of lovers and menaces, tubers and humans, homes and foreign spaces. "I love to unravel in the morning like a fighting fish," Walsh writes, "fins / pink and blue like kindergarten names." Debut collections are rarely so confident and well-formed.