Authors Madeline Sonik and Caitlyn Vernon
Win Victoria Book Prize Awards

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Two Greater Victoria authors were recognized for their literary achievements this evening at the 2012 Victoria Book Prize Awards Gala. Madeline Sonik, author of Afflictions & Departures, was named the winner of the 9th Annual City of Victoria Butler Book Prize; and Caitlyn Vernon, author of Nowhere Else on Earth: Standing Tall for the Great Bear Rainforest, was named the winner of the 5th Annual Bolen Books Children’s Book Prize.


Afflictions & Departures is a collection of Sonik’s first-person experiential essays. In addition to incidents and feelings recaptured from memory, Sonik seeks out connections between the microcosm of the daily events of her childhood and adolescence, and the social, historical, and scientific trends of the time. Afflictions & Departures begins by considering the turbulent and changing nature of the world in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the world in which the author was conceived and born. Like many couples of that era, Sonik’s parents focused on shared social and economic ambitions at the expense of authentic personal feeling. These ambitions would erode and, by the 1970s, completely collapse. These essays are as incisive as they are moving, and leave the reader with a sense of history as it was lived, not as it is codified in countless textbooks.

Madeline Sonik is a teacher, writer, and editor. Her work has been published extensively in journals, magazines, and academic anthologies. She has a MFA in Creative Writing and a PhD in Education, both from the University of British Columbia. She has also been the recipient of numerous awards, prizes and fellowships for her writing. Madeline Sonik currently teaches at the University of Victoria.

Full of breathtaking photographs and suggestions for ways to preserve this unique ecosystem, Nowhere Else on Earth: Standing Tall for the Great Bear Rainforest is a timely and inspiring reminder that we need to stand up for our wild places before they are gone. Environmental activist Caitlyn Vernon guides young readers through a forest of information, sharing her personal stories, ecological facts, the voices of First Nations, and ways to take action to protect this unique part of the world. The book aims to inspire young readers to understand that there is power in speaking out, and encourages them to take action for the future they want to live in.
Caitlyn Vernon grew up on British Columbia’s Pacific Coast and now calls Victoria home. She will never be too big to wade in the ocean in her gumboots, poke around in tide pools, explore coastal forests or climb trees and mountains. Vernon has a background in biology and environmental studies and is currently a campaigner with Sierra Club BC, working to protect the Great Bear Rainforest. In September, *Nowhere Else on Earth* was awarded the Lane Anderson Award for the best in Canadian science writing for young-readers. This is Caitlyn Vernon's first book.

The other four finalists for the City of Victoria Butler Book Prize included William Deverell for *I’ll See You in My Dreams* (McClelland & Stewart); Esi Edugyan, *Half-Blood Blues* (Thomas Allen); Rachel Fisher, Heather Stretch, Robin Tunnicliffe for *All the Dirt* (TouchWood Editions); and Mark Zuehlke for *Breakout from Juno* (Douglas & McIntyre). Kit Pearson for *The Whole Truth* (HarperCollins) and Pamela Porter for *I’ll Be Watching You* (Groundwood Books) were the two other finalists for the Bolen Books Children’s Book Prize.

Held at the Union Club of British Columbia, the gala featured readings by the finalists, offering guests the opportunity to meet the writers and have their books autographed. The event was emceed by Jo-Ann Roberts of CBC Radio. City of Victoria Poet Laureate Janet Rogers opened the evening with a reading from her recent work, *It Can Happen*. The winners and finalists were treated to an overnight stay at the Magnolia Hotel and Spa and the Victoria Marriott Inner Harbour.

Founded in 2004, the City of Victoria Butler Book Prize is a partnership between the City of Victoria and Brian Butler of Butler Brothers Supplies. The Bolen Books Children’s Book Prize was founded in 2008 and is funded by Bolen Books. Additional sponsors include the Greater Victoria Public Library, the Magnolia Hotel and Spa, the Union Club of British Columbia, the Victoria Marriott Inner Harbour Hotel, CBC Radio and Island Blue Print.

The Victoria Book Prize Society establishes the policy and criteria for the prizes, appoints the juries and administers the competitions. For more information, visit: [www.victoria.ca](http://www.victoria.ca) or [www.victoriabookprizes.ca](http://www.victoriabookprizes.ca)

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