



## Bill Gaston and Monique Gray Smith Win 2018 Victoria Book Prizes

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – Tonight at the 15<sup>th</sup> annual Victoria Book Prize Gala, Bill Gaston was awarded the City of Victoria Butler Book Prize for *A Mariner's Guide to Self Sabotage* (Douglas & McIntyre), and Monique Gray Smith was awarded the Bolen Books Children's Book Prize for her book *Speaking Our Truth: A Journey of Reconciliation* (Orca Book Publishers).

Mayor Lisa Helps and co-sponsor Brian Butler presented Bill Gaston with the \$5,000 City of Victoria Butler Book Prize, and Samantha Holmes from Bolen Books presented Monique Gray Smith with the \$5,000 Bolen Books Children's Book Prize.

*A Mariner's Guide to Self Sabotage* is a set of 10 cautionary tales showcasing Gaston's range and narrative versatility, moving seamlessly from the funny to the poignant to the surprising and absurd. Gaston has a gift for making ordinary moments feel transcendent. Gaston's earlier book *Gargoyles* (House of Anansi) won the City of Victoria Butler Book Prize in 2007.

Gaston is a novelist, short-story writer and playwright. His short-story collection *Gargoyles* was short-listed for the Governor General's Literary Award and the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize and won the ReLit Award. In 2002, Gaston was a finalist for the Giller Prize with *Mount Appetite*, and the inaugural recipient of the Timothy Findley Prize, awarded by the Writer's Trust of Canada.

*Speaking Our Truth: A Journey of Reconciliation* actively explores Canada's collective history, present and future. It may be the first time some readers have thought about what reconciliation means and, more specifically, what it means to them and their role in it. Readers will learn about the lives of residential school survivors and listen to allies who are putting the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into action.

Monique Gray Smith is a mixed-heritage woman of Cree, Lakota and Scottish ancestry and a proud mom of twins. She is an accomplished consultant, writer and international speaker. Her first novel, *Tilly: A Story of Hope and Resilience* won the 2014 Burt Award for First Nations, Metis and Inuit Literature. Gray Smith and her family are blessed to live on Lekwungen territory.

"This is our 15<sup>th</sup> year awarding the City of Victoria Butler Book Prize and we are still going strong," says Victoria Book Prize President Alyssa Polinsky. "We couldn't do this without the support of our generous sponsors, an engaged community of readers and all the talented writers and illustrators we celebrate each year."

The awards gala was held at the Union Club of British Columbia and was hosted by CBC Radio's Gregor Craigie. Victoria's Poet Laureate Yvonne Blomer opened the evening with a reading from her recent works.

Established in 2004, the City of Victoria Butler Book Prize is a partnership between the City of Victoria and Brian Butler of Butler Brothers Supplies. In 2008, Mel Bolen founded the Bolen Books Children's Book Prize to provide authors and illustrators of books for children and youth an increased opportunity for recognition. Additional sponsors include the Greater Victoria Public Library, Island Blue Print, Chateau Victoria, Magnolia Hotel and Spa, Inn at Laurel Point, Friesens Corporation and CBC Radio.

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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