

## THE WINNERS OF THE 2010 HELEN AND STAN VINE CANADIAN JEWISH BOOK AWARDS

### **EVA WISEMAN**

Born in Hungary, Eva Wiseman came to Canada with her family when she was a girl. She began writing at a young age, and her first young adult novel, *A Place Not Home*, was a finalist for numerous literary awards across North America and was selected for the New York Public Library's annual Best Books for the Teen Age list. Her second novel, *My Canary Yellow Star*, was also shortlisted for several awards. It won the McNally Robinson Books for Young People Award, and was selected for the New York Public Library's annual Best Books for the Teen Age list. Her novel *No One Must Know* was equally critically acclaimed and won the Manitoba Young Readers' Choice Award. Her novel *Kanada* was shortlisted for the Governor General's Literary Award and was the winner of the prestigious Geoffrey Bilson Award for Historical Fiction. Wiseman is the mother of two, and she lives in Winnipeg with her husband.

#### ***Puppet* by Eva Wiseman**

*Puppet* is a heartbreaking episode in history, explained through the story of a young servant girl in the late 1800s.

The year is 1882. A young servant girl named Esther disappears from a small Hungarian village. Several Jewish men from the village of Tisza Eszvar face the 'blood libel' — the centuries-old calumny that Jews murder Christian children for their blood. At the trial, a fourteen-year-old Jewish boy named Morris Scharf becomes the star witness of corrupt authorities who coerce him into testifying against his fellow Jews, including his own father.

This powerful fictionalized account of one of the last blood libel trials in Europe is told through the eyes of Julie, a friend of the murdered Esther, and a servant at the jail where Morris is imprisoned. Julie is no stranger to suffering herself. An abused child, when her mother dies her alcoholic father separates her from her beloved baby sister. Julie and Morris, bound by the tragedy of the times, become unlikely allies. Although *Puppet* is a novel, it is based upon a real court case that took place in Hungary in 1883. In Hungary today, the name Morris Scharf has become synonymous with "traitor."

Wiseman illuminates a heartbreaking episode in history for young readers.

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### **ROBIN MCGRATH**

Robin McGrath is the author and editor of fifteen books, including *Trouble and Desire* (1995), *Escaped Domestic* (1998), *Hoist Your Sails and Run* (1999), *Donovan's Station* (2002), *Covenant of Salt* (2005), and *Livyers World* (2007). She has published over two hundred pieces in magazines such as *Beaver*, *Inuit Art Quarterly*, *Parchment*, *TickleAce*, *Fiddlehead*, and *Room of One's Own*. She is an occasional contributor to CBC Radio, has written and narrated three video scripts, had her first play staged in 2002, and is currently the non-fiction columnist for the St. John's newspaper *The Telegram*. McGrath was born in Newfoundland and lives in Labrador with her husband, provincial court judge, John Joy. She is a member of The Writers Union of Canada and the Letterset Association of Newfoundland and Labrador.

#### ***The Winterhouse* by Robin McGrath**

"My father has married me to a mad old man." These words, written on a slip of paper inside a fading brocade collar, are a clue to the unlikely marriage of a Jewish remittance man and a 14-year-old orphan in a remote Newfoundland fishing station. More curious still are the connections that entangle a retired school teacher and an Israeli scholar almost two centuries later. When the bereaved Rosehannah Quint and her mysterious "mister" retreat into winter quarters at the back of Ireland's Eye, the two begin to develop an understanding based on curiosity as well as upon need - an understanding that works its way down the years. *The Winterhouse* is a compelling novel about finding oneself and creating one's own community.

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## **ALLAN LEVINE**

Allan Levine is an award-winning internationally selling author and historian born and based in Winnipeg. He has written eleven books including *Coming of Age: A History of the Jewish People of Manitoba* (2009), *The Devil in Babylon: Fear of Progress and the Birth of Modern Life* (2005) and *Scattered Among the People: The Jewish Diaspora in Ten Portraits* (2002). Levine received a PhD in history from the University of Toronto in 1985 and has taught history and world issues at St. John's Ravenscourt School in Winnipeg since 1984. He remains committed to making history come alive. Levine expresses that "the past has many lessons for us and it...is impossible to understand today's world without the perspective that history offers." He is married with two children.

### ***Coming of Age* by Allan Levine**

This 500-page comprehensive and accessible history of the Jews of Manitoba reflects what is already known about the community, introduces new material, and casts an eye at the 130-year history of Jews in Manitoba from the earliest days of settlement in 1880 up to the present. *Coming of Age* is the first book-length history of the Jews of Manitoba to be published in over thirty years. Published by the Jewish Heritage Centre of Western Canada and designed by co-publisher Heartland Associates.

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## **MICHAEL R. MARRUS**

Michael Marrus is a Fellow of Massey College, the Chancellor Rose and Ray Wolfe Professor Emeritus of Holocaust Studies, and Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Toronto. A member of the Order of Canada, he is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and the Royal Historical Society. He is a graduate of the University of Toronto and received his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of California at Berkeley. A few years ago, Marrus also completed a master's degree in the University of Toronto's Faculty of Law. He has lectured widely in North America, Europe, Israel and South Africa, and has been a Guggenheim Fellow, a visiting fellow of St. Anthony's College, Oxford and the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University. Among his principal interests is the history of the Holocaust, about which he has taught at the University of Toronto, UCLA and the University of Cape Town, in South Africa. He is the author of seven books. In collaboration with Robert Paxton he published *Vichy France and the Jews* in 1981, which received a National Jewish Book Award. His other books include the prize-winning *The Holocaust in History*, *Mr. Sam: The Life and Times of Samuel Bronfman*, and *The Unwanted: European Refugees in the Twentieth Century*. Marrus has also published a book on the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal for the Bedford Series in History and Culture of St. Martin's Press. Professor Marrus was a member of the International Catholic-Jewish Historical Commission to examine the role of the Vatican and the Holocaust.

### ***Some Measure of Justice* by Michael R. Marrus**

Can there ever be justice for the Holocaust? During the 1990s – triggered by lawsuits in the United States against Swiss banks, German corporations, insurance companies, and owners of valuable works of art – claimants and their lawyers sought to rectify terrible wrongs committed more than a half century earlier. *Some Measure of Justice* explores this most recent wave of justice-seeking for the Holocaust: what it has been, why it emerged when it did, how it fits with earlier reparation to the Jewish people, its significance for the historical representation of the Holocaust, and its implications for justice-seeking in our time.

Writings on the subject of Holocaust reparations have largely come from participants, lawyers, philosophers, journalists, and social scientists specializing in restitution. In *Some Measure of Justice*, Michael Marrus takes up the issue as a historian deeply involved with legal issues. He engages with larger questions about historical understanding and interpretation as they enter the legal arena. Ultimately this book asks what constitutes justice for a great historic wrong. And whether such justice possible?

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## **DAVID SAX**

David Sax is a freelance journalist originally from Toronto. He lived for three years in both Buenos Aires, Argentina and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, covering South American politics, business, travel and culture for publications including the Globe and Mail, the Walrus, Wine Spectator, Foreign Policy, and the New Republic...not to mention a few surfing magazines. After returning to Canada in 2005 he continued writing articles, including regular pieces for Toronto Life, and contributions to Rolling Stone, GQ, American Way, and The

Huffington Post. His first book is *Save the Deli*, published by McClelland and Stewart (Canada) and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (USA). The book, a cultural history and travelogue of the Jewish delicatessen business, has led to the creation of Sax's popular blog [www.savethedeli.com](http://www.savethedeli.com). Sax recently moved to New York, where he writes for magazines such as *Portfolio* and *New York*.

### ***Save the Deli* by David Sax**

Part culinary travelogue, part cultural history, *Save the Deli* is a must-read for anyone whose idea of perfect happiness is tucking into a pastrami on rye with a pickle on the side. Corned beef. Pastrami. Brisket. Matzo balls. Knishes. Mustard and rye. In this book about Jewish delicatessens, about deli's history and characters, its greatest triumphs, spectacular failures, and ultimately the very future of its existence, David Sax goes deep into the world of the Jewish deli. He explores the histories and experiences of the immigrant counterman and kvetching customer; examines the pressures that many delis face; and enjoys the food that is deli's signature. In New York and Chicago, Florida, L.A., Montreal, Toronto, Paris, and beyond, Sax strives to answer the question, Can Jewish deli thrive, and if so, how? Funny, poignant, and impeccably written, *Save the Deli* is the story of one man's search to save a defining element of a culture — and the sandwiches — he loves.

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### **KENNETH SHERMAN**

Kenneth Sherman is a Toronto-born poet and essayist. His essays have appeared in *BRICK*, *Partisan Review*, *AGNI* and *Queen's Quarterly*. He is also the author of the award-winning book of essays, *Void and Voice*. His most recent publication, a book of poems entitled *Black River*, was called 'a triumph' by *The Globe and Mail*. Sherman teaches writing at Sheridan College and is a member of the Editorial Board of "Parchment," Canada's Journal of Jewish creative writing.

### ***What the Furies Bring* by Kenneth Sherman**

In the foreword to his new book, *What the Furies Bring*, acclaimed poet and essayist Kenneth Sherman asks, in the wake of 9/11, 'What help is writing to the writer? What help to the reader?' Examining the works of authors who have lived and written under great duress, Sherman suggests how writing can serve as 'equipment for living.' He contemplates Primo Levi's desire to tell his story — a yearning that kept the Holocaust survivor writing through periods of crushing depression. Sherman's insight into the ways diary writing afforded Chaim Kaplan and Anne Frank a means to keep their sanity and humanity under the most harrowing conditions will prove inspirational to readers. In 'The Angel of Disease,' Sherman examines the curative aspects of writing by discussing authors who, though critically ill, persisted in their quest for the right word. Sherman's book is not limited to writers from our past. He captures our current situation in, 'Poetry and Terrorism,' a prescient essay that delves into the moral and aesthetic considerations brought to the foreground since the terrorist attacks on New York City. He follows this with essays that consider whether contemporary poets and novelists have risen to the task of articulating the new age. The 'furies' in Sherman's title belong to history and what they bring is not only destruction but the opportunity to transform our art and ourselves.

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### **JEFFREY VEIDLINGER**

Jeffrey Veidlinger holds the Alvin H. Rosenfeld Chair in Jewish Studies at Indiana University, where he is also Professor of History and Director of the Robert A. and Sandra S. Borns Jewish Studies Program. Professor Veidlinger's first book, *The Moscow State Yiddish Theatre* won a National Jewish Book Awards and the Barnard Hewitt Award for Outstanding Research in Theatre History, was a finalist for the George Freedley Memorial Award, and was a *Choice Magazine* Outstanding Academic Title. His second book, *Jewish Public Culture in the Late Russian Empire*, was published by Indiana University Press in 2009. Professor Veidlinger co-directs the Archives of Historical and Ethnographic Yiddish Memories (AHEYM—the acronym means "homeward" in Yiddish), and is currently working on a book entitled *In the Shadow of the Shtetl*. In 2006, Professor Veidlinger was named a Top Young Historian by History News Network. Born in Toronto, Canada, Veidlinger currently resides in Bloomington, Indiana.

### ***Jewish Public Culture in the Late Russian Empire* by Jeffrey Veidlinger**

In the midst of the violent, revolutionary turmoil that accompanied the last decade of tsarist rule in the Russian Empire, many Jews came to reject what they regarded as the apocalyptic and utopian prophecies of political dreamers and religious fanatics, preferring instead to focus on the promotion of cultural development in the present. *Jewish Public Culture in the Late Russian Empire* examines the cultural identities that Jews were creating and disseminating through voluntary associations such as libraries, drama circles, literary clubs, historical societies, and even fire brigades. Jeffrey Veidlinger explores the venues in which prominent cultural figures -- including Sholem Aleichem, Mendele Moykher Sforim, and Simon Dubnov -- interacted with the general Jewish public, encouraging Jewish expression within Russia's multicultural society. By highlighting the cultural experiences shared by Jews of diverse social backgrounds -- from seamstresses to parliamentarians -- and in disparate geographic locales -- from Ukrainian *shtetls* to Polish metropolises -- the book revises traditional views of Jewish society in the late Russian Empire.

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### **GOLDIE SIGAL**

Goldie Sigal, former Judaica Librarian at McGill University, has an M.A. (English Literature) and an M.L.S. from McGill. She edited *A Garment Worker's Legacy: The Joe Fishstein Collection of Yiddish Poetry* (Montreal: McGill University Libraries, 1998). The website by the same name, of which she is the curator, is both a virtual catalogue and a virtual exhibition of highlights from the Fishstein Collection. Now retired, she leads a Yiddish *leyen krayz* group, and continues to participate in activities involving books, art, music and Yiddish. A native Montrealer, Sigal is married and has 3 children and 8 grandchildren, to whom her Yiddish/English "comic book" is dedicated.

### ***Stingy Buzi and King Solomon / Der Karger Buzi un Shloymen Hameylekh***

Written and illustrated in full colour by Goldie Sigal, *Stingy Buzi and King Solomon* is a comic book with a difference. The dialogue balloons are in Yiddish script, with transliteration and translation into English under each illustration. Yiddish alphabet and vocabulary charts are included in the book, as well as the dialogue balloons in the format of a play.

The plot of the book is based on folktales about King Solomon, as interpreted in a mimeographed school play by J.J. Grossman, a former teacher in the *Yidische folks shuln un Perets shuln* about 60 years ago. The 1972 edition, published by *Heym un shul* by a group of mothers who wished to foster innovative curriculum materials, was black and white and entirely in Yiddish. Several decades later, with the arrival of the computer and some assistance from the Aaron and Sonia Fishman Foundation for Yiddish Culture, the present edition was published. The author hopes that it will be enjoyed by children from about 4 to 10 years old, their parents and grandparents, and anyone who wants to learn or practice Yiddish while having fun doing so.