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Family story of Acadian Expulsion double winner at 2021 Atlantic Book Awards

Stephen Cooke · Multimedia Journalist · Posted: 21 hours ago | Updated: 1 hour ago
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Tyler LeBlanc, Nova Scotian author of *Acadian Driftwood: One Family and the Great Expulsion*, was the recipient of two 2021 Atlantic Book Awards on Thursday night. - Goose Lane Editions

A family history dating back to the Acadian Expulsion of 1755, a posthumous book by one of Nova Scotia's best-known writers and a novel detailing the complicated relationship between a white reporter and a wrongly imprisoned Nigerian woman are among the winners of the 2021 Atlantic Book Awards on Thursday night.

Presented during the virtual Atlantic Book Festival at www.atlanticbookawards.ca, the list of recipients saw Tyler LeBlanc named twice for his painstakingly researched examination of his own family's heritage, *Acadian Driftwood: One Family and the Great Expulsion* (Goose Lane Editions).

Shortlisted in four categories, LeBlanc's account of the effects of this significant event in Acadian history received both the Evelyn Richardson Non-Fiction Award and the Democracy 250 Atlantic Book Award for Historical Writing.

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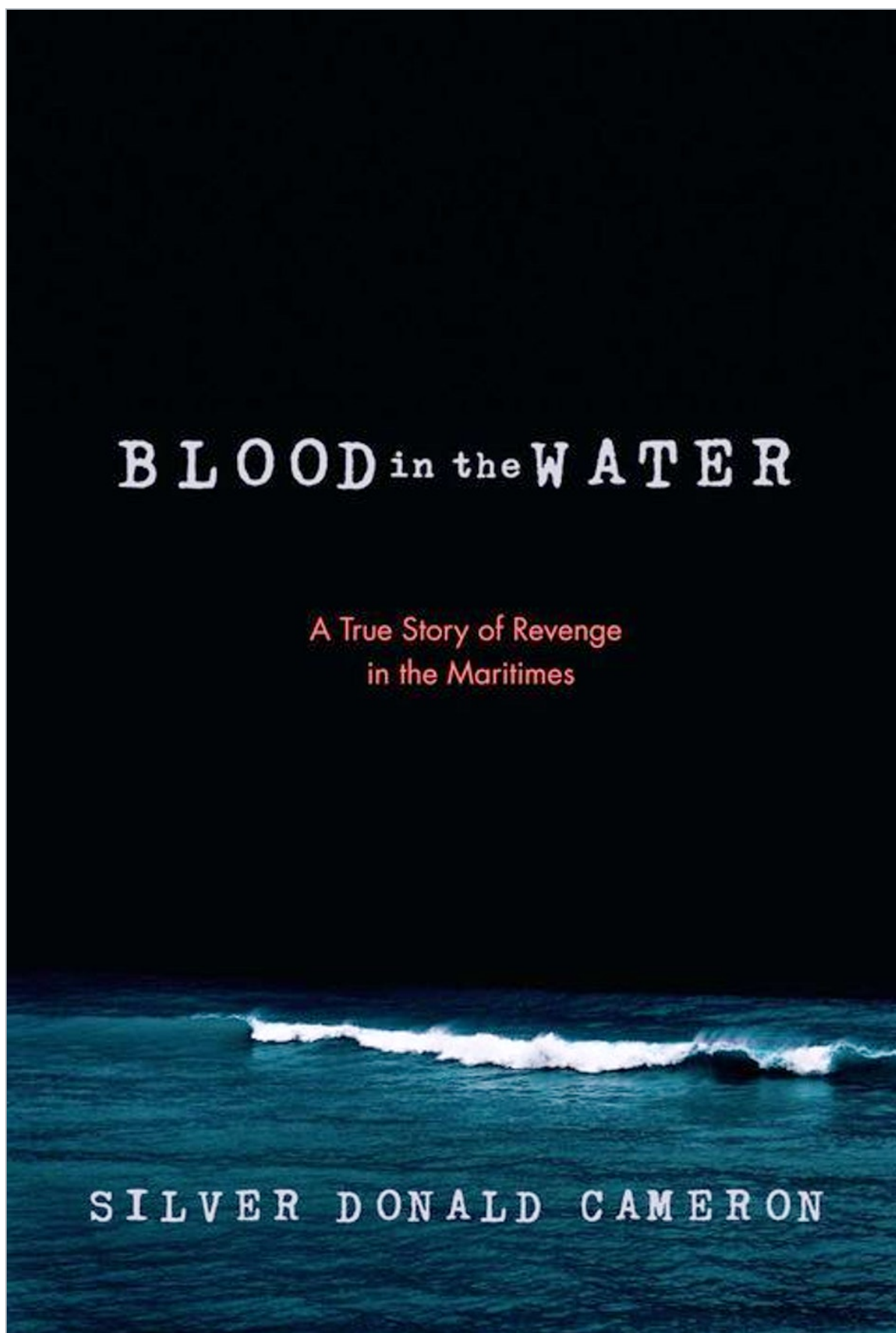
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With new research, a fresh perspective and additional insight into the effect of both French and British settlement on Indigenous communities, LeBlanc hopes the attention from the awards will find new readers for Acadian Driftwood beyond the Atlantic Region.

“The response and the reach that it’s had so far, especially given that the book’s release has happened entirely within the context of the pandemic, has exceeded my expectations for where it’s gone so far,” said LeBlanc, who would like to see the book distributed in Louisiana and translated into French.

“I’m hopeful that the recognition that it’s gotten from the awards continues to expand. Here in the region it can play an interesting role and become an educational tool, but I also would love to see it make its way across Canada so regions further away that don’t have much contact with this history can have a glimpse into it.”



Silver Donald Cameron's Blood In The Water, about the murder of an Isle Madame man over poached lobster, received the Robbie Robertson Dartmouth Book Award at the 2021 Atlantic Book Awards on Thursday. - Viking Canada

Taking a page from more recent history, the late Cape Breton author Silver Donald Cameron’s Blood in the Water: A True Story of Revenge in the Maritimes (Viking Canada) won the Robbie Robertson Dartmouth

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Book Award. Meanwhile, Cape Breton Magazine publisher and Breton Books founder Ronald Caplan earned the 2021 Pioneer Award for 50 years of contributions to Atlantic Canadian culture.

The Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award, one of Canada's most prestigious book prizes, was presented to Nova Scotia poet and author Anne Simpson for her third novel *Speechless* (Freehand Books), in which rookie reporter Sophie MacNeil comes to the aid of teenager A'isha Nasir — sentenced to death for adultery under sharia laws — with good, if misguided, intentions.

Thursday also saw the presentation of the first Maxine Tynes Nova Scotia Poetry Award, presented by the late poet's sister Margaret Nyajeka to Tammy Armstrong for her collection *Year of the Metal Rabbit* (Gaspereau Press). The J.M. Abraham Poetry Award recipient was Halifax's Afua Cooper for *Black Matters* (Roseway Publishing) with photography by Wilfried Raussert.

Also from Nova Scotia were winners Morgan Murray for *Dirty Birds* (Breakwater Books) for the Best Atlantic-Published Book Award; Julie Curwin's *The Appendage Formerly Known as Your Left Arm* (Boularderie Island Press) for the Alistair MacLeod Prize for Short Fiction; Lesley Crewe's *The Spoon Stealer* (Nimbus Publishing) for the Jim Connors Dartmouth Book Award; and Gary Leeson's *The Dome Chronicles* (Nevermore Press) for the Margaret and John Savage First Book Award - non-fiction.

For young readers, Cape Breton-raised author Tom Ryan's *Keep This to Yourself* (Albert Whitman) won the Ann Connor Brimer Award for Atlantic Canadian Children's Literature while the Lillian Shepherd Memorial Award for Excellence in Illustration went to Halifax's Sydney Smith for *I Talk Like a River*, written by Jordan Scott (Neal Porter Books).

2021 Atlantic Book Award winners

Alistair MacLeod Prize for Short Fiction

Julie Curwin — *The Appendage Formerly Known as Your Left Arm* (Boularderie Island Press)

Ann Connor Brimer Award for Atlantic Canadian Children's Literature

Tom Ryan — *Keep This to Yourself* (Albert Whitman & Company)

Atlantic Book Award for Scholarly Writing

Andrea Procter — *A Long Journey: Residential Schools in Labrador and Newfoundland* (ISER Books)

Atlantic Publishers Marketing Association's Best Atlantic-Published Book Award

Breakwater Books for *Dirty Birds* by Morgan Murray

Democracy 250 Atlantic Book Award for Historical Writing

Tyler LeBlanc — *Acadian Driftwood: One Family and the Great Expulsion* (Goose Lane Editions)

Evelyn Richardson Non-Fiction Award

Tyler LeBlanc — *Acadian Driftwood: One Family and the Great Expulsion* (Goose Lane Editions)

Jim Connors Dartmouth Book Award (Fiction)

Lesley Crewe for *The Spoon Stealer* (Nimbus Publishing)

J.M. Abraham Poetry Award

Afua Cooper — *Black Matters*, with photography by Wilfried Raussert (Roseway Publishing)

Lillian Shepherd Memorial Award for Excellence in Illustration

Sydney Smith for *I Talk Like a River*, written by Jordan Scott (Neal Porter Books)

Margaret and John Savage First Book Award (Fiction)

Alison Taylor for *Aftershock* (HarperCollins)

Margaret and John Savage First Book Award (Non-Fiction)

Garry Leeson — *The Dome Chronicles* (Nevermore Press)

Maxine Tynes Nova Scotia Poetry Award

Tammy Armstrong — *Year of the Metal Rabbit* (Gaspereau Press)

Robbie Robertson Dartmouth Book Award (Non-Fiction)

Silver Donald Cameron (posthumously) for *Blood on the Water: A True Story of Revenge in the Maritimes* (Viking Canada)

Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award

Anne Simpson — *Speechless* (Freehand Books)

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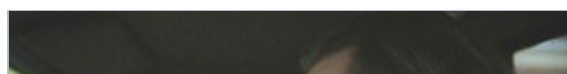
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