



## **Media Background: 2010 BC Award Finalists**

## Quick Facts

**Name:** British Columbia's National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction (short form: the BC Award)

**Value:** \$40,000

**Age:** This is the sixth year of the annually presented award

**Funding:** The British Columbia Achievement Foundation

**Shortlist announced:** November 23, 2009

**Winner announced:** January 15, 2010

**2010 jury:** Andreas Schroeder (chair), Vicki Gabereau, Philip Marchand

**2010 shortlist:**

Ian Brown for *The Boy in the Moon: A Father's Search for His Disabled Son*

Karen Connelly for *Burmese Lessons: A Love Story*

Eric Siblin for *The Cello Suites: J.S. Bach, Pablo Casals, and the Search for a Baroque Masterpiece*

Kenneth Whyte for *The Uncrowned King: The Sensational Rise of William Randolph Hearst*

**Past winners:**

2009: Russell Wangersky for *Burning Down the House*

2008: Lorna Goodison for *From Harvey River*

2007: Noah Richler for *This Is My Country, What's Yours?*

2006: Rebecca Godfrey for *Under the Bridge*

2005: Patrick Lane for *There Is a Season*

## About the Jury

**Vicki Gabereau** is an award-winning radio and television personality. She is the former host of Gabereau on CBC and Gabereau Live! on CTV, and the author of a memoir, *This Won't Hurt a Bit*. Ms. Gabereau was inducted into the Canadian Association of Broadcasters Hall of Fame in 2006, and received a Lifetime Achievement award from RTNDA Canada in 2008.

**Philip Marchand** is an author, book columnist, and magazine writer. One of Canada's best-known commentators on books, Mr. Marchand was the book columnist for the *Toronto Star* for eighteen years and since 2008 for the *National Post*. Mr. Marchand wrote the biography, *Marshall McLuhan*, and *Ripostes: Reflections on Canadian Literature*.

**Andreas Schroeder** (Chair) is an author, television, and radio host, and holder of the Rogers Communications Chair in Creative Non-fiction at UBC. Mr. Schroeder has written 21 books, published in most of Canada's major magazines and newspapers, and served as a long-time contributor to CBC Radio's "Basic Black Show." His latest book is an autobiographical novel entitled *Renovating Heaven*.

## About the Award

British Columbia's National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction is Canada's largest literary award for non-fiction. A vital part of Canadian culture, the award is intended to recognize and honour fine Canadian writing in the field of non-fiction, provide a forum for writers to provoke thought and explore new ways of understanding. The BC Award celebrates the best work in this important genre.

The \$40,000 award originates in BC, and is presented annually.

### Eligibility Guidelines:

1. All entries must be first print editions published in Canada in English between November 1, 2008 and October 31, 2009, and be widely available to Canadian readers in bookstores and libraries. Books not published by August 31 but to be published by October 31, 2009, may be submitted as bound galley proofs.
2. All entries must be authored by a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident of Canada.
3. Entries may be authored by one or two individuals. Multi-authored titles are not eligible.
4. Entries should demonstrate a high standard of craft and quality of thought, whatever their subject or category within the genre.
5. Self-published books are not eligible. These are understood to include books authored by a senior officer of the book's publishing firm, and/or whose publication was underwritten in part or whole by the author. Such books as textbooks, how-to books, photographic books, etc. are not eligible.
6. Posthumously published books are not eligible.
7. The jury may request submissions at its discretion.

### **About the Foundation**

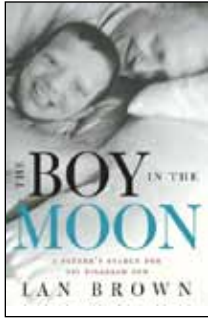
The British Columbia Achievement Foundation was established in 2003 to celebrate excellence and achievement. It is dedicated to recognizing excellence in the arts, culture, community service and enterprise.

The foundation is independent, and was established with an endowment of \$8 million from the Province of British Columbia.

The BC Award for Canadian Non-Fiction is one of six initiatives of the foundation. The others are the BC Community Achievement Awards, the BC Creative Achievement Awards for Applied Art and Design, the BC Creative Achievement Award for Aboriginal Art, and the British Columbia Aboriginal Business Awards.

For further information, please contact:

British Columbia Achievement Foundation  
[www.bcachievement.com](http://www.bcachievement.com) | [info@bcachievement.com](mailto:info@bcachievement.com) | Tel: 604-261-9777



2010 FINALIST

*The Boy in the Moon: A Father's Search for His Disabled Son*

By Ian Brown

Random House Canada | Hardcover | 304 pages | ISBN: 978-0-307-35710-6

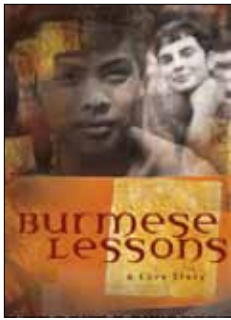
*"Brown ... forges his most authentic thematic through-line yet: a raw, flawed (deeply exhausted) man in search of his mute, unknowable son, or at least a way to be proud of him."*  
—The Globe and Mail

*"Even with the most intimate material, he maintains his reporter's discipline and impartiality, a rigour that makes the storytelling still more intimate."*  
—The Walrus

Walker Brown was born with a genetic mutation so rare that doctors call it an orphan syndrome: perhaps 300 people around the world also live with it. Walker turns twelve in 2008, but he weighs only 54 pounds, is still in diapers, can't speak and needs to wear special cuffs on his arms so that he can't continually hit himself. "Sometimes watching him," Brown writes, "is like looking at the man in the moon—but you know there is actually no man there. But if Walker is so insubstantial, why does he feel so important? What is he trying to show me?"

In a book that owes its beginnings to Brown's original *Globe and Mail* series, he sets out to answer that question, a journey that takes him into deeply touching and troubling territory. "All I really want to know is what goes on inside his off-shaped head," he writes, "But every time I ask, he somehow persuades me to look into my own."

IAN BROWN is a feature writer for the *Globe and Mail*; the anchor of TVO's *Human Edge* and the *View from Here*, Canada's preeminent television documentary series, and for ten years was the host of CBC Radio's *Talking Books*. His reporting and writing have won him more than a dozen national magazine and newspaper awards. He is the author of two books, *Freewheeling* and *Man Overboard*, and the editor of the anthology *What I Meant to Say: The Private Lives of Men*.



2010 FINALIST

*Burmese Lessons: A Love Story*

By Karen Connelly

Random House Canada | Paperback | 288 pages | ISBN: 978-0-307-35668-0

*“Connelly is a sensualist, as a writer; this memoir is redolent with the smells of food, the stink of bodies, the weight of stones carried on her head as she helps the women in a camp build a well, the sharp, deep pleasures of sex, the edgy frustrations of sex denied, for the sake of propriety.”*

—The Globe and Mail

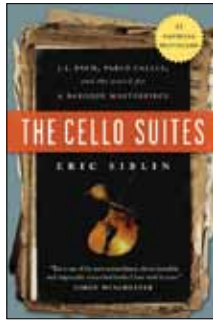
*In Burmese Lessons, we feel the country's physical heat, the warmth of its people and its stormy politics at once ... add in Connelly's overriding love for the place and certain people in it ... and we're drawn into something immediate and intense.”*

—The Hour (CBC)

*Burmese Lessons* is a love story. Unlike conventional love stories, this one takes the reader into a world as dangerous and heartbreaking as it is enchanting.

When Karen Connelly finds herself in Burma in the late 1990s, she is immersed in a world of students staging mass demonstrations in opposition to Burma's dictators, revolutionaries fighting an armed insurgency against that same military regime, and refugees living in hellish limbo in Thailand. Connelly first comes to love a wounded, remarkably beautiful country, then a gifted man who has given his life to its struggle for political change. *Burmese Lessons* is illuminated by the sensual language and flashes of humour that have won her fans around the world.

KAREN CONNELLY is the author of nine books of non-fiction, fiction, and poetry, the most recent being *The Lizard Cage*, which the *New York Times Book Review* compared to the works of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Nelson Mandela, and George Orwell. It was nominated for the Kiriyama Prize and won Britain's Orange Broadband Prize for New Writers. Raised in Calgary, Connelly has lived in different parts of Asia and Europe and now has two homes, one in Toronto and one in Greece.



2010 FINALIST

*The Cello Suites: J.S. Bach, Pablo Casals, and the Search for a Baroque Masterpiece*  
By Eric Siblin

House of Anansi Press | Hardcover | 319 pages | ISBN: 978-0-88784-222-1

*"Siblin's curiosity and passion for his subject is evident throughout, and his method of structuring the story according to the arrangement of the music is inspired ..."*  
—Quill & Quire

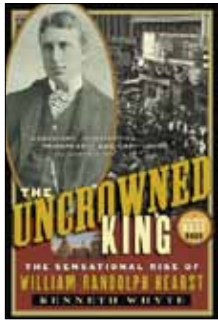
*"...an erudite and immensely readable miscellany that will give you the sensation of having consumed a library over a weekend or less ... Conveying in mere words sounds as rich and multifarious as those that comprise the Cello Suites takes no small literary gift."*  
—The Montreal Gazette

One autumn evening, not long after ending a stint as pop music critic at the *Montreal Gazette*, Eric Siblin attended a recital of Johann Sebastian Bach's Cello Suites. There, something unlikely happened: he fell deeply in love with the music. So began an epic quest that would unravel three centuries of mystery, intrigue, history, politics, and passion.

Part biography, part music history, and part literary mystery, *The Cello Suites* weaves together three dramatic narratives: The first features Johann Sebastian Bach and the missing manuscript of his suites from the eighteenth century; the second follows Pablo Casals and the historic discovery of the music in Spain in the late nineteenth century; and the third is Eric Siblin's own infatuation with the suites in the twenty-first century. This love affair leads Siblin to the back streets of Barcelona and a Belgian mansion; to interviews with cellists Mischa Maisky, Anner Bylsma, and Pieter Wispelwey; to archives, festivals, and conferences; and even to cello lessons—all in pursuit of answers to the mysteries that continue to haunt this piece of music more than 250 years after its composer's death.

*The Cello Suites* is an incomparable, beautifully written, true-life journey of discovery, fuelled by the transcendent power of a musical masterpiece.

ERIC SIBLIN is an award-winning journalist and filmmaker, and was the pop music critic at the *Montreal Gazette*. He made the transition to television in 2002 with the documentary *Word Slingers*, which explores the curious subculture of competitive Scrabble tournaments. The film aired in Canada and the U.S., and won a Jury Award at the Yorkton Short Film & Video Festival. He also co-directed the documentary *In Search of Sleep: An Insomniac's Journey*, which aired in Canada and Europe. *The Cello Suites* is his first book.



2010 FINALIST

*The Uncrowned King: The Sensational Rise of William Randolph Hearst*  
By Kenneth Whyte

Vintage Canada | Paperback | 560 pages | ISBN: 978-0-679-31343-4

*“Incendiary, intoxicating.... Remarkable and captivating.”*  
—The Globe and Mail

*“Whyte accomplishes his mission, achieving the same conclusion that Hearst himself also reached: those were the days.”*  
—The New York Times

*“I’ve been watching him, and I notice that when he wants cake, he wants cake; and he wants it now. And I notice that after a while he gets his cake.”*  
—Senator George Hearst, on his son, William Randolph Hearst

A lively, unexpected and impeccably researched piece of popular history, *The Uncrowned King* reveals how an unheralded young newspaperman from San Francisco walked into the media capital of the world and created the most successful daily of his time, pushing the medium to an unprecedented level of excitement and influence, and leading serious observers to wonder if newspapers might be “the greatest force in civilization,” more powerful even than kings and popes and presidents.

KENNETH WHYTE is one of Canada’s preeminent journalists, the publisher and editor-in-chief of *Maclean’s*, Canada’s weekly current affairs magazine. He served as editor of the monthly *Saturday Night Magazine* at the peak of its popularity and as founding editor-in-chief of the *National Post*.