

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Laurier poet Brian Henderson nominated for Governor General's Award

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WATERLOO — Dr. Brian Henderson, director of Wilfrid Laurier University Press, is a finalist in the 2007 Governor General's Literary Awards competition in the poetry category for his book, *Nerve Language*.

As well, the French translation of Laurier English professor Tamas Dobozý's book of short stories, *Last Notes and Other Stories*, has been nominated in the English-to-French translation category. The translators for *Dernières notes* are Lori Saint-Martin and Paul Gagné.

The Canada Council for the Arts announced the 70 finalists in the categories of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, drama, children's literature (text and illustration) and translation in Ottawa this week. A total of 1,417 books were nominated.

"It's exciting and I'm very honoured," said Henderson.

*Nerve Language*, his ninth book, is published by Pedlar Press.

Other finalists in the poetry category are Margaret Atwood (*The Door: Poems*); Don Domanski (*All Our Wonder Unavenged*); Dennis Lee (*Yesno: Poems*); and Rob Winger (*Muybridge's Horse: A Poem in Three Phases*).

On his website [www.brianhenderson.net](http://www.brianhenderson.net) Henderson talks about *Nerve Language*:

*Nerve Language* centres on the *Memoirs* of Daniel Paul Schreber, perhaps the most written about of mental patients, as well as one of the most articulate. The *Memoirs* formed the basis of Freud's theory of paranoia...

(Schreber) had become a high ranking judge in Leipzig before being plunged into breakdown. He entered an asylum voluntarily

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but after six months was committed by his wife, his doctor and his former employer, at which point his worst experiences began. During his madness (and even after his release) he believed God spoke to him directly by way of what he called *nerve language*... He believed that a terrible disaster had befallen the universe and that he was the last person alive.

“Terrifying and beautiful, the language in this book is an incendiary crossing of wires. These poems are as likely to break you open as they are to explode,” the Canada Council said of *Nerve Language* in its news release.

Barbara Carey in *The Toronto Star* called *Nerve Language*, “A powerful jolt of a book... both harrowing and thought provoking.”

Poet Di Brandt calls *Nerve Language* “an extraordinary and courageous book. Every poem in it sparkles like snow, like diamonds, like black coal about to be lit: it is that cold, that shining, that fiery with inspiration and madness...”

This is the first time Henderson has been nominated for a Governor General's Literary Award.

“I thought a couple of earlier books might have a look-in, but it didn't happen,” he said. There was, however, “a fairly good buzz” in literary circles about *Nerve Language*, so he was cautiously optimistic.

Winners of the award in each category will receive \$25,000 and a specially crafted copy of the book. Publishers of winning books will receive \$3,000 to support promotional activities. Non-winning finalists will each receive \$1,000.

The winners will be announced Nov. 27 — “six nail-biting weeks” from now, as Henderson sees it. The awards will be presented Dec. 13 at Rideau Hall by Governor General Michaëlle Jean.