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Laurier welcomes acclaimed poet Sonnet L'Abbé as Edna Staebler Writer-in-Residence

WATERLOO – Award-winning poet and essayist Sonnet L'Abbé will speak at Laurier's Waterloo campus Jan. 22, marking her inaugural talk as the university's Edna Staebler Writer-in-Residence for the Winter 2015 term.

L'Abbé, who was appointed as Laurier's Edna Staebler Writer-in-Residence in July, will deliver a public lecture entitled "**Poetry and the Problem of Moving an Ecodisaster-Weary Heart**" on Thursday, **Jan. 22** from **7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.** in the **Hawk's Nest**, located in the Fred Nichols Campus Centre. All are invited to the lecture and a welcome reception to commemorate the beginning of L'Abbé's term as writer-in-residence.

"We are especially glad to have a poet as our Writer-in-Residence, and are fascinated by the possibilities presented by Sonnet's interests in botany and eco-critical writing," said **Tanis MacDonald**, associate professor in Laurier's Department of English and Film Studies and chair of the writer-in-residence selection committee. "I see her being a real bridge to creative discussion between the arts and sciences at Laurier, as well as a bolster to our course offerings in writing and reading poetry, and in eco-critical literature."

L'Abbé is the author of two collections of poetry, *A Strange Relief* and *Killarnee* (both published by McClelland and Stewart). She is also a poetry critic and the 2014 guest editor of *Best Canadian Poetry*. In 2000, she won the Bronwen Wallace Award for most promising writer under the age of 35. She is now at work on two new manuscripts, *Sentient Mental Flower Book* and *Sonnet's Shakespeare*, her third and fourth collections of poems.

L'Abbé has taught at the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies and at the University of British Columbia Okanagan. She was also chosen to travel across the country for two months in 2013, as the artist-in-motion for the 2017 Starts Now initiative hosted by CBC Radio-Canada, Community Foundations of Canada, and Via Rail.

During her term as writer-in-residence — which runs from Jan. 19 to April 13 — L'Abbé will give public lectures, provide one-on-one feedback to student writers and writers in the community, and conduct writing workshops.

Each year, the writer-in-residence acts as a resource to the Laurier community while pursuing individual writing projects, offering a portrait of a writer at work. Award-winning non-fiction writer Andrew Westoll was Laurier's inaugural writer-in-residence in 2013, followed by playwright and filmmaker Colleen Murphy, who held the position in winter 2014.

The Edna Staebler Laurier Writer-in-Residence position was established in 2012 by a bequest from the late Edna Staebler, prolific creative non-fiction writer and author of the very popular *Schmecks* series of books that celebrate the culture and cuisine of Waterloo region. A separate bequest from Staebler sponsors the Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction, awarded each year to a writer's first or second book of creative non-fiction.