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Laurier announces 2018 shortlist for the prestigious Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction

WATERLOO – Three outstanding books have been shortlisted for the 2018 Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction. The \$10,000 award, administered by Wilfrid Laurier University, recognizes Canadian writers for a first or second work of creative non-fiction that includes a Canadian locale and/or significance.

“The books on this year’s shortlist demonstrate the breadth of what creative non-fiction can be,” said Bruce Gillespie, an award juror and professor in Laurier’s Digital Media and Journalism program. “The list includes two memoirs — one about life as an emergency room physician and another about a journalist who reflects on her mother’s revelation that they’ve been on the run from the mob since she was a child — and an examination of the history of Canada through the stories of its maps, those made by Indigenous people as well as by European colonists, that comes to life through its rich, descriptive narrative. All unique in their own way, these books are expertly written and compelling reads.”

The books on the 2018 shortlist, listed alphabetically by author surname, are:

Run, Hide, Repeat: A Memoir of a Fugitive Childhood, by Pauline Dakin (Viking)

When Pauline Dakin was 23, her mother made a startling confession: their family had been hiding from the Mafia since she was a child, as part of a shadowy witness protection program. In some ways, the revelation was a relief, explaining their many sudden moves and her mother’s obsession with privacy. But as it seemed to solve some mysteries, it presented another: Was her mother’s incredible explanation true? In this page-turning memoir, Dakin recounts her family’s unique story, which reads like the best of spy thrillers but is, at the same time, a moving reflection on the demands and limits of our closest relationships.

Life on the Ground Floor: Letters From the Edge of Emergency Medicine, by James Maskalyk (Doubleday Canada)

After practising emergency medicine in Canada, Sudan and Ethiopia, Dr. James Maskalyk returns to his grandfather’s Alberta farm to be with the 90-year-old widower in the final days of his life. Here, he uses the alphabet as a loose guide to reflect on his experiences in emergency rooms in cities as different as Toronto and Addis Ababa, while deftly weaving in boyhood memories of his grandfather and observations about what it is like to watch and care for him at the end of his life, past the point of medical intervention. The result is a work that is insightful and informative while also highly readable and entertaining.

A History of Canada in Ten Maps: Epic Stories of Charting a New Land, by Adam Shoalts (Allen Lane)

Adam Shoalts’s *A History of Canada in Ten Maps: Epic Stories of Charting a New Land* examines early maps of discrete sections of the country made by Europeans and Indigenous peoples to explore questions about place, identity, naming and sovereignty in the evolving history of what would become “Canada.”

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Shoalts draws on a wide range of archival sources, emphasizing the significant roles played by Indigenous mapmakers and guides in the explorations of well-known figures such as Champlain, Hearne, Mackenzie, and Thompson. Shoalts's engaging and well-written book explores the contingent and often violent events that led to the establishment of the boundaries of present day Canada.

The winner of the Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction will be announced later this month.

ABOUT THE EDNA STAEBLER AWARD FOR CREATIVE NON-FICTION

Established and endowed by writer and award-winning journalist Edna Staebler in 1991, the Edna Staebler Award for Creative Non-Fiction is administered by Wilfrid Laurier University, the only university in Canada to bestow a nationally recognized literary award.

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