

A RESEARCH REPORT BY BOOKNET CANADA



BNC

RESEARCH 09.2014

Hilary Weston
Writers' Trust Prize
for Nonfiction:
Sales trends of
shortlisted and
winning titles



**BOOKNET
CANADA**

PREPARED BY BNC STAFF

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INTRODUCTION

Being nominated for a literary award is an exciting time for a publisher, because with national recognition comes increased orders and sales. So what's the best way to stay on top of the game? Can you predict when your books are going to start flying off the shelves? Will you need to reprint? What happens if you win?

BNC Research's literary award studies help Canadian publishers avoid surprises during awards season. By looking at sales data from previous years, we can better predict potential sales and order spikes, giving you the data you need to ensure you have enough copies in the warehouse and on booksellers' shelves.

APPROACH

This study examines sales and order trends for the shortlisted titles for the 2013 and 2012 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction. Unit sales are tracked during the weeks prior to the shortlist announcement and following the winner announcement to gauge titles' performance during this period and how much of an impact these literary prizes may have.

This study compares the 2013 Hilary Weston Prize shortlisted titles by volume sold, units on hand (OH), and units on order (OO). The volume sold comparison shows how the award is reaching readers, on-hand numbers show how retailers are predicting sales, and on-order information shows publishers the retail demand.

The year-over-year comparison looks at the winning titles from 2010 to 2013, showing the impact of the award over time and noting patterns and special cases.

CAVEATS

Based on publisher feedback, we estimate that BNC SalesData represents 85% of book industry sales in Canada. Certain retail categories are not completely covered by our retail panel, and this should be noted in any interpretation of these results, as the effect of certain awards may not be fully captured in our data. These retail categories include:

- Independent bookstores: BNC SalesData includes many major independent bookstores, but does not include many smaller ones, any of which could be actively promoting an award winner. It also does not capture many specialty independent bookstores (children's books, science fiction, etc.) where a genre- or subject-specific award may have more impact. However, we are able to detect even the slightest variation in sales in our independent panel, so we are confident that sales changes in the independent market are well represented.
- K-12 and higher-education sales: our panel does not include direct institutional sales to schools or college/university textbook sales.
- New booksellers have begun contributing to BNC SalesData since our first literary awards study, conducted in October 2006. Some changes seen in year-over-year sales figures may be due to the increased number of stores reporting sales, rather than a true increase in overall sales.
- At this time, ebook sales are not represented in BNC's data. Therefore, all numbers in this report refer to print books only.

THE HILARY WESTON WRITERS' TRUST PRIZE FOR NONFICTION

2013 SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED SEPTEMBER 18

2013 WINNER ANNOUNCED OCTOBER 21

2012 SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED SEPTEMBER 25

2012 WINNER ANNOUNCED NOVEMBER 12

SUMMARY

The Hilary Weston Prize for Nonfiction for 2013 was awarded to Graeme Smith for his book *The Dogs Are Eating Them Now: Our War in Afghanistan*. This title saw a spike in sales at the announcement of the shortlist and then also after it was named the victor. Thomas King's *The Inconvenient Indian* had soaring sales that began before the shortlist was announced, and the title continued to see higher sales for the duration of the studied period.

King's *The Inconvenient Indian* was nominated for several other awards including the Canadian Booksellers Association Nonfiction Book of the Year and the Trillium Award; it won the RBC Taylor Prize for Literary Non-Fiction and the BC National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction. *The Dogs Are Eating Them Now* was also nominated for the RBC Taylor Prize, the BC National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction, and the Writer's Trust Shaughnessy Cohen Prize for Political Writing.

After the announcement of its win, *The Dogs Are Eating Them Now* saw a modest spike in sales and then maintained steady units sold until the end of the year. All titles nominated saw an increase in sales during the winter holidays—most notably, *The Inconvenient Indian* with a 51% increase between the weeks of December 8th and 22nd.

2012 showed a different pattern. The 2012 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction was awarded to Candace Savage's *A Geography of Blood: Unearthing Memory from a Prairie Landscape*.

During the shortlist period, all nominees saw an increase in unit sales. The winning title saw a small increase upon announcement of the shortlist, followed by a significant spike when it was declared the winner, with sales nearly three times higher than the previous week.

A Geography of Blood saw an increase of 181% when it was announced as the winner, compared to a modest bump of 6% when it received the nomination. The trend shows that the Hilary Weston Prize had an effect on unit sales for the winner, but for the remainder of the shortlisted titles the increases are less significant. In short, it was winner take all.

Note: All dates used in the graphs represent week-ending dates.



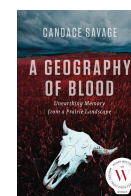
2013

Winner:

- *The Dogs Are Eating Them Now: Our War in Afghanistan* by Graeme Smith, Knopf Canada, 9780307397805

Nominees:

- *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America* by Thomas King, Doubleday Canada, 9780385664226
- *The Once and Future World: Nature As It Was, As It Is, As It Could Be* by J.B. MacKinnon, Random House, 9780307362186
- *This Great Escape* by Andrew Steinmetz, Biblioasis, 9781927428337
- *Projection: Encounters With My Runaway Mother* by Priscila Uppal, Dundurn, 9781771022743



2012

Winner:

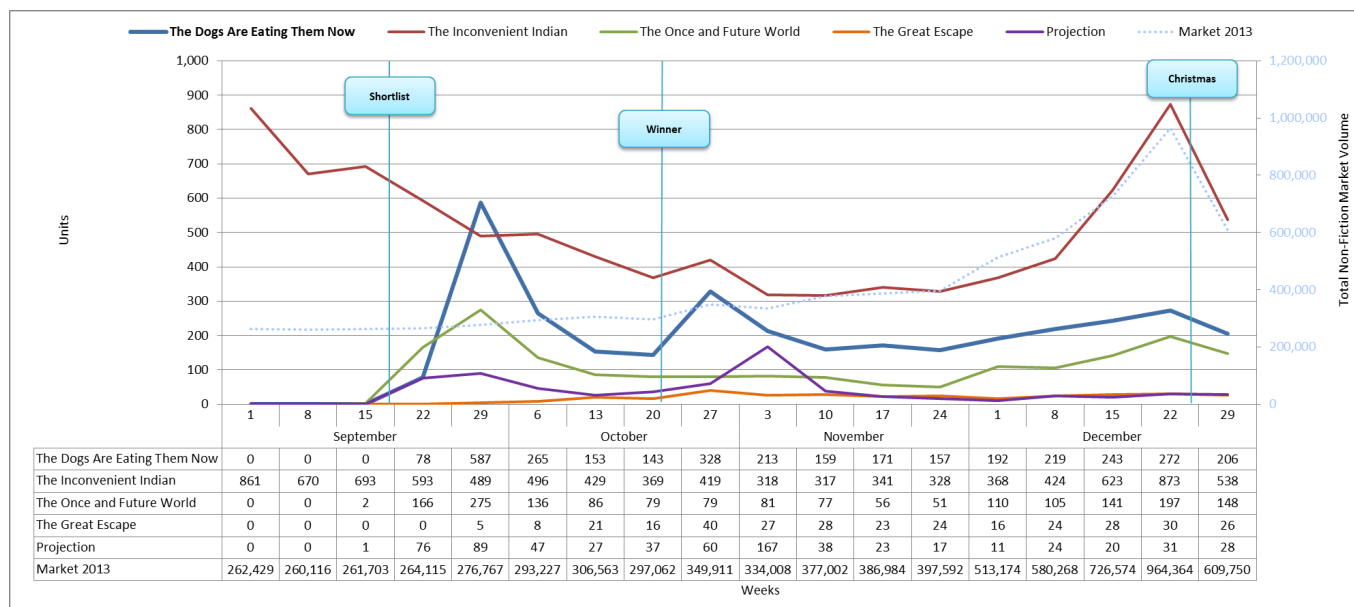
- *A Geography of Blood: Unearthing Memory from a Prairie Landscape* by Candace Savage, Greystone Books and David Suzuki Foundation, 9781553652342

Nominees:

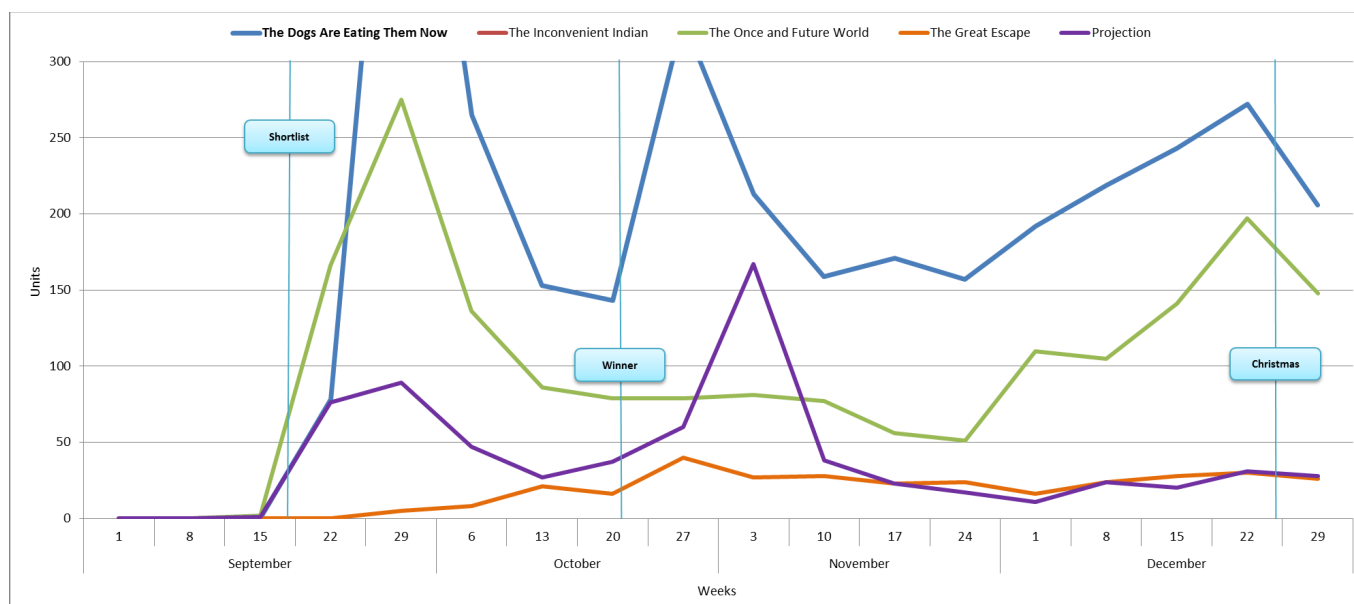
- *Intolerable: A Memoir of Extremes* by Kamal Al-Solaylee, HarperCollins Publishers, 9781554688869
- *Solar Dance: Genius, Forgery, and the Crisis of Truth in the Modern Age* by Modris Eksteins, Knopf Canada, 9780307398598
- *Straphanger: Saving Our Cities and Ourselves from the Automobile* by Taras Grescoe, HarperCollins Publishers, 9781554686247
- *The Measure of a Man: The Story of a Father, a Son, and a Suit* by JJ Lee, McClelland & Stewart, 9780771046476

SHORTLIST COMPARISON – 2013

Volume Sold for All Shortlist Titles and Winner

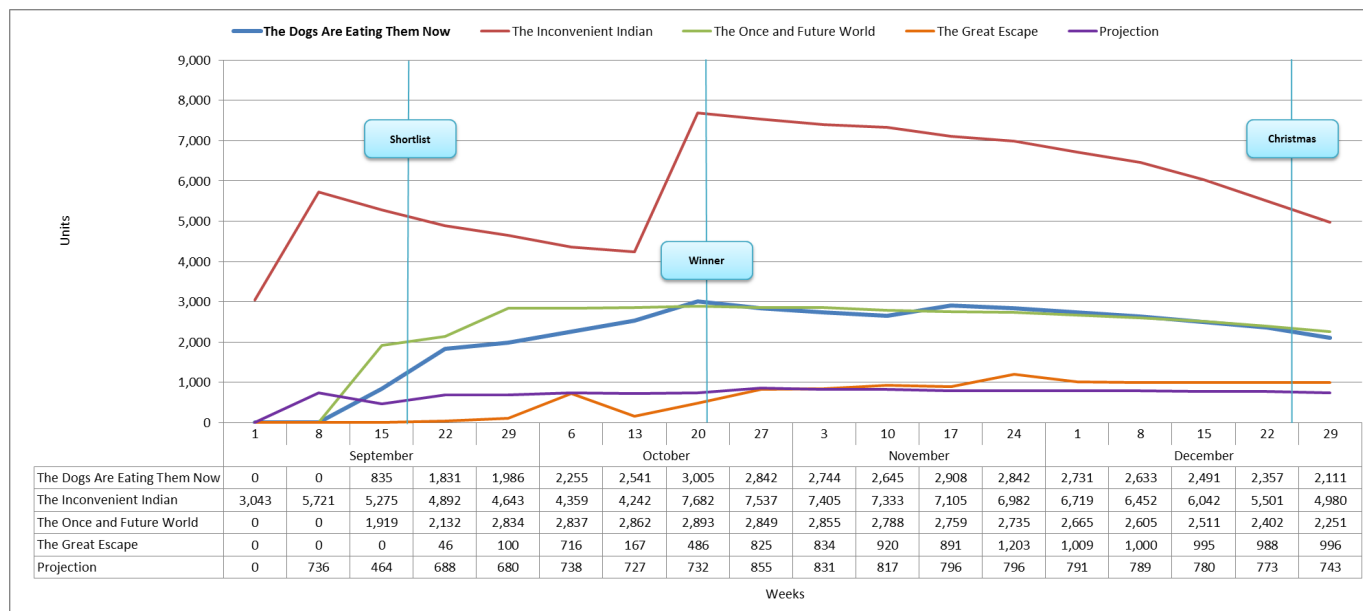


Expanded View of Sales Under 300 Units

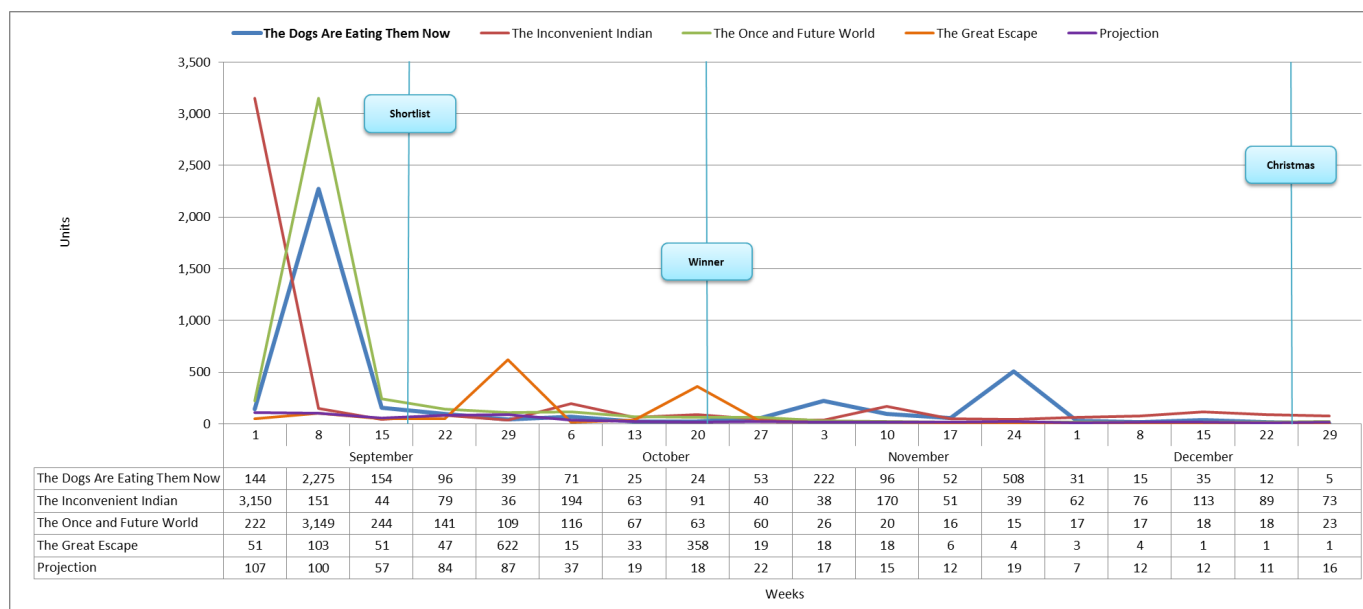


SHORTLIST COMPARISON – 2013 (CONTINUED)

Volume On Hand for All Shortlist Titles and Winner

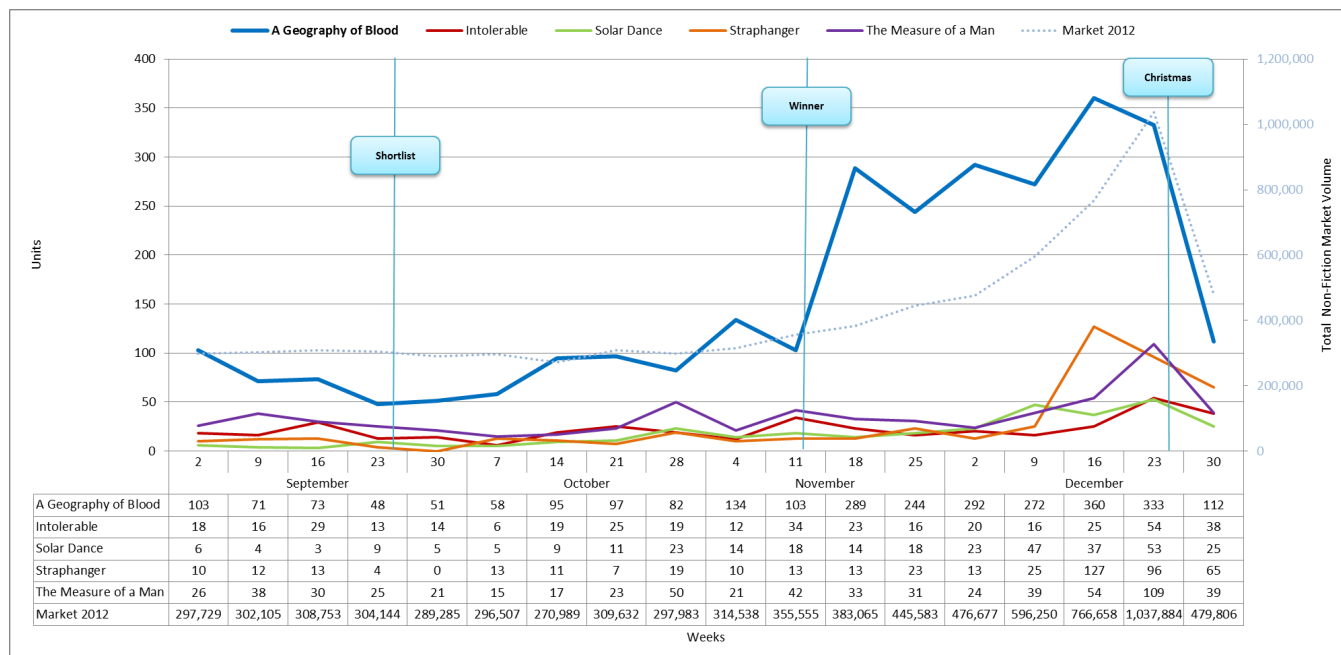


Volume On Order for All Shortlist Titles and Winner

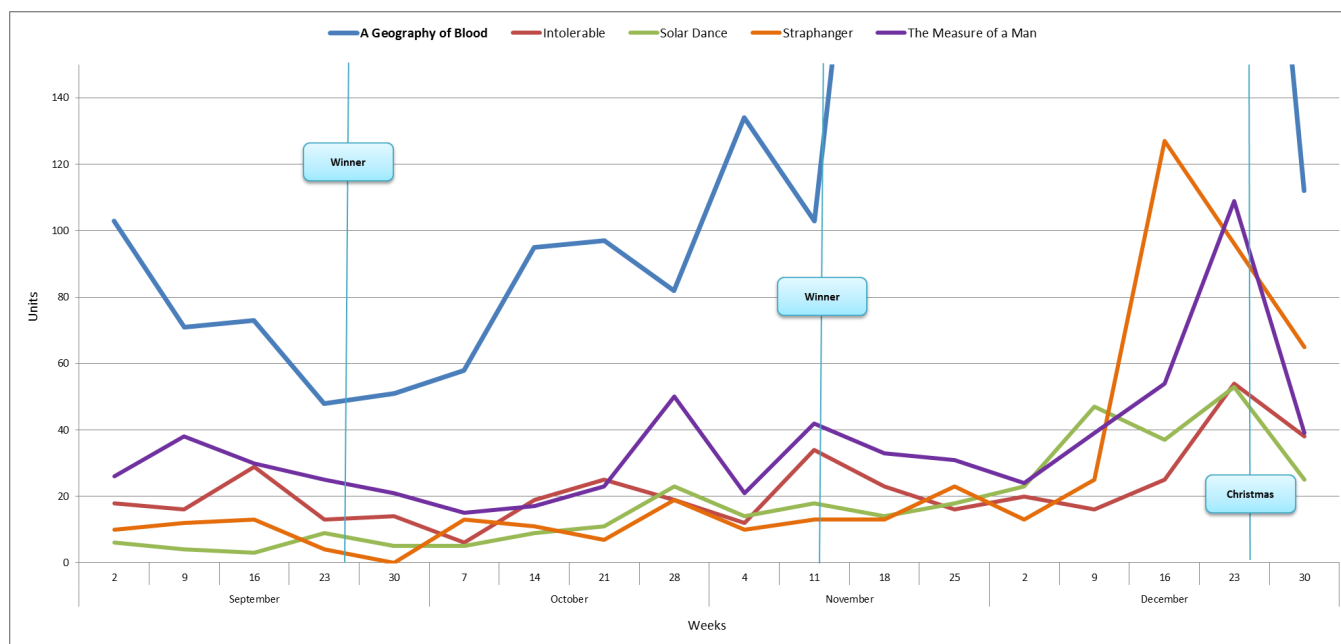


SHORTLIST COMPARISON – 2012

Volume Sold for All Shortlist Titles and Winner



Expanded View for Sales Under 140 Units



YEAR-OVER-YEAR WINNER COMPARISON 2010–2013

2013

Graeme Smith's *The Dogs Are Eating Them Now: Our War in Afghanistan*

KNOPF CANADA

Hardcover Trade | 9780307397805 | \$32.00

2012

Candace Savage's *A Geography of Blood: Unearthing Memory from a Prairie Landscape*

GREYSTONE BOOKS AND DAVID SUZUKI FOUNDATION

Hardcover Trade | 9781553652342 | \$26.95

2011

Charles Foran's *Mordecai: The Life & Times*

KNOPF CANADA

Hardcover Trade | 9780676979633 | \$39.95

Trade Paperback | 9780676979657 | \$24.95

2010

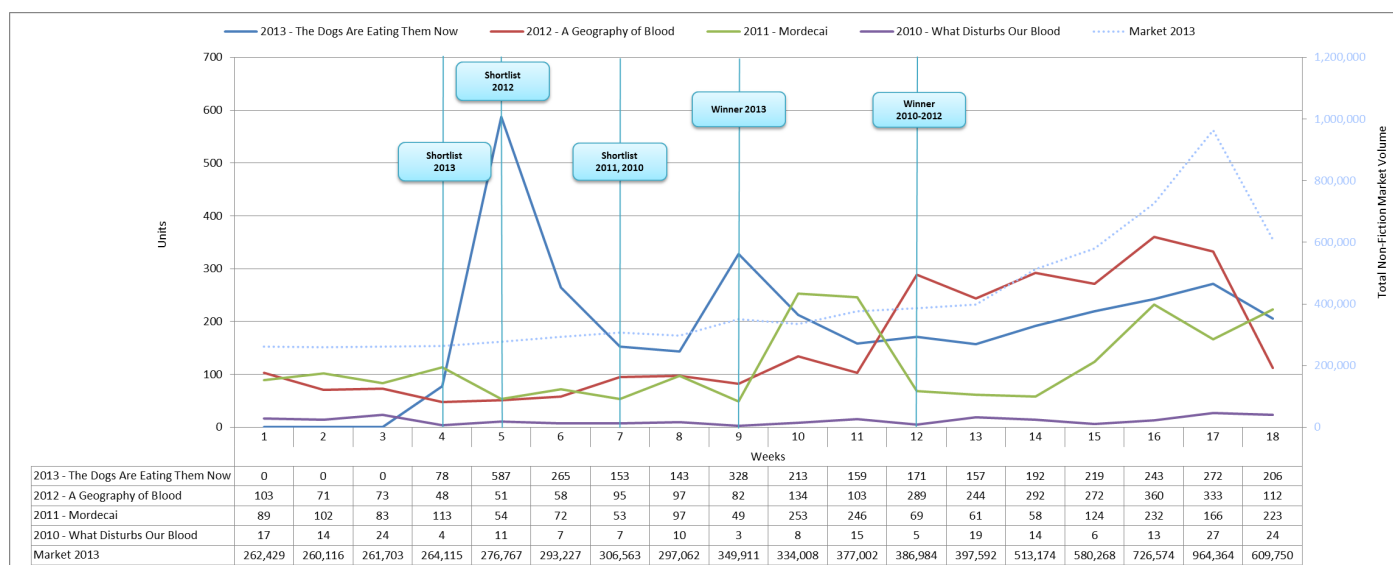
James FitzGerald's *What Disturbs Our Blood: A Son's Quest to Redeem the Past*

RANDOM HOUSE CANADA

Hardcover Trade | 9780679313151 | \$34.95

Trade Paperback | 9780679313168 | \$22.00

Volume Sold for Winning Titles



Expanded View for Sales Under 300 Units