

A RESEARCH REPORT BY BOOKNET CANADA



BNC

RESEARCH 09.2014

Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize: 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 2012 and 2013 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize. 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 to see how much of a sales impact these literary prizes may have.

This study compares the 2013 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction 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 2008 to 2013, showing the impact of the award over time.

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.
- At this time, ebook sales are not represented in BNC's data. Therefore, all numbers in this report refer to print books only.

Please also note that 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.

ROGERS WRITERS' TRUST FICTION PRIZE

2013 SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED SEPTEMBER 30
2013 WINNER ANNOUNCED NOVEMBER 20

2012 SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED SEPTEMBER 19
2012 WINNER ANNOUNCED NOVEMBER 7

SUMMARY

The Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize for 2013 was awarded to *A Beautiful Truth* by Colin McAdam. McAdam was also shortlisted for a Governor General's Literary Award. Sales for *A Beautiful Truth* rose 226% from the week leading up to its win to the week following it. However, *A Beautiful Truth* didn't see the sales spikes during this study period that other titles also nominated for the prize did.

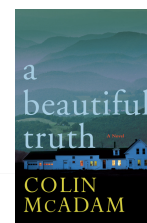
Book sales for Coady's *Hellgoing* and Moore's *Caught* dominate this study likely due to the fact they were both shortlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize on October 8th. The announcement of the Scotiabank Giller Prize winner on November 5th also reflected higher book sales for *Hellgoing* and *Caught* than the November 20th announcement of the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize winner.

Hellgoing was named the Scotiabank Giller Prize winner on November 5th, which likely explains its 431% rise in sales that week. Yet, before the announcement of the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize champion, sales for *Hellgoing* dipped 28% and then rose again by 19%—possibly due to the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize winner announcement and its surrounding publicity.

The trend shows that this prize has some effect on unit sales for the winner, but for 2013 at least, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact effect since some of the shortlisted titles performed much better than others, likely due to the impact of other influential awards and publicity.

In 2012, The Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize was awarded to Tamas Dobozy for his book *Siege 13*. Dobozy's book was also shortlisted for a Governor General's Literary Award along with Linda Spalding's novel *The Purchase*, which ended up winning the Governor General's Fiction Award and being selected as a pick for Oprah's Book Club. Also sharing the Writers' Trust shortlist was *Inside* by Alix Ohlin, which was also nominated for the 2012 Scotiabank Giller Prize.

All three of these titles saw an increase during the shortlist period, particularly in the couple of weeks right before the winner was announced. The sales for these titles were on average 31% greater following the announcement of the winner, than in the week prior. However, they saw the largest sales spike in the few weeks leading up to Christmas.



2013

Winner:

- *A Beautiful Truth* by Colin McAdam, Penguin Group, 9780670066360

Nominees:

- *The Girls* by Krista Bridge, Douglas and McIntyre Ltd., 9781553659822
- *Hellgoing: Stories* by Lynn Coady, House of Anansi Press, 9781770893085
- *A Bird's Eye* by Cary Fagan, House of Anansi Press, 9781770893108
- *Caught* by Lisa Moore, House of Anansi Press, 9780887842450



2012

Winner:

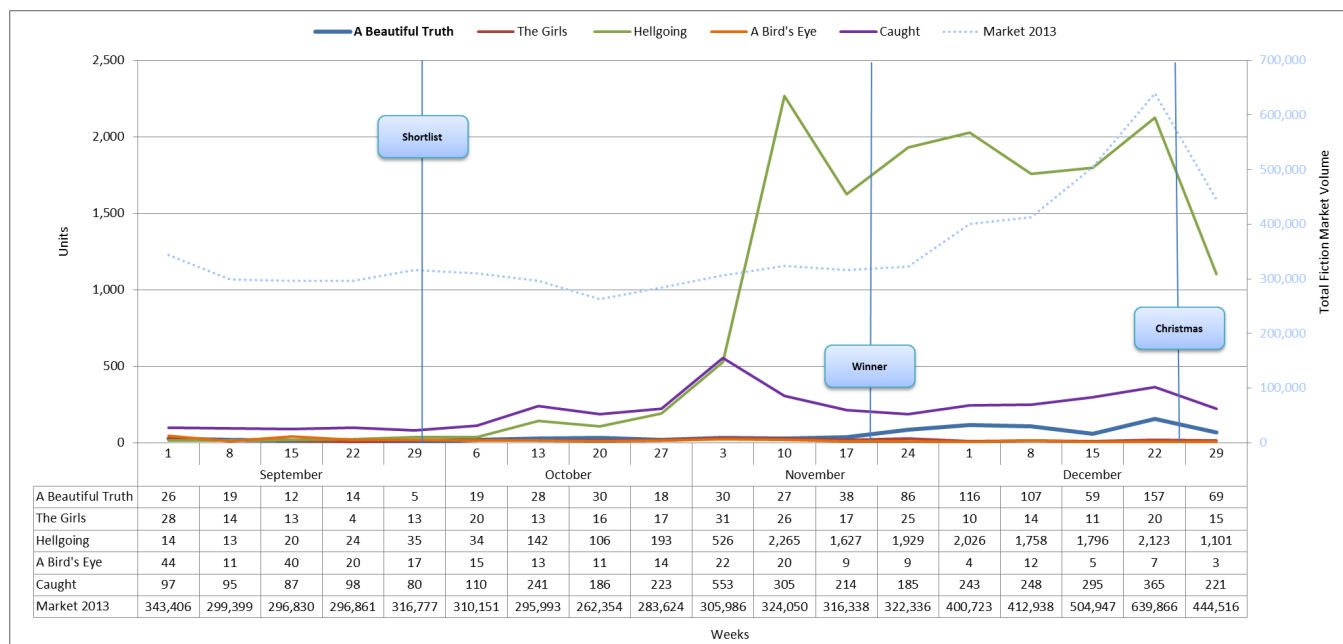
- *Siege 13* by Tamas Dobozy, Thomas Allen Publishers, 9781771022040

Nominees:

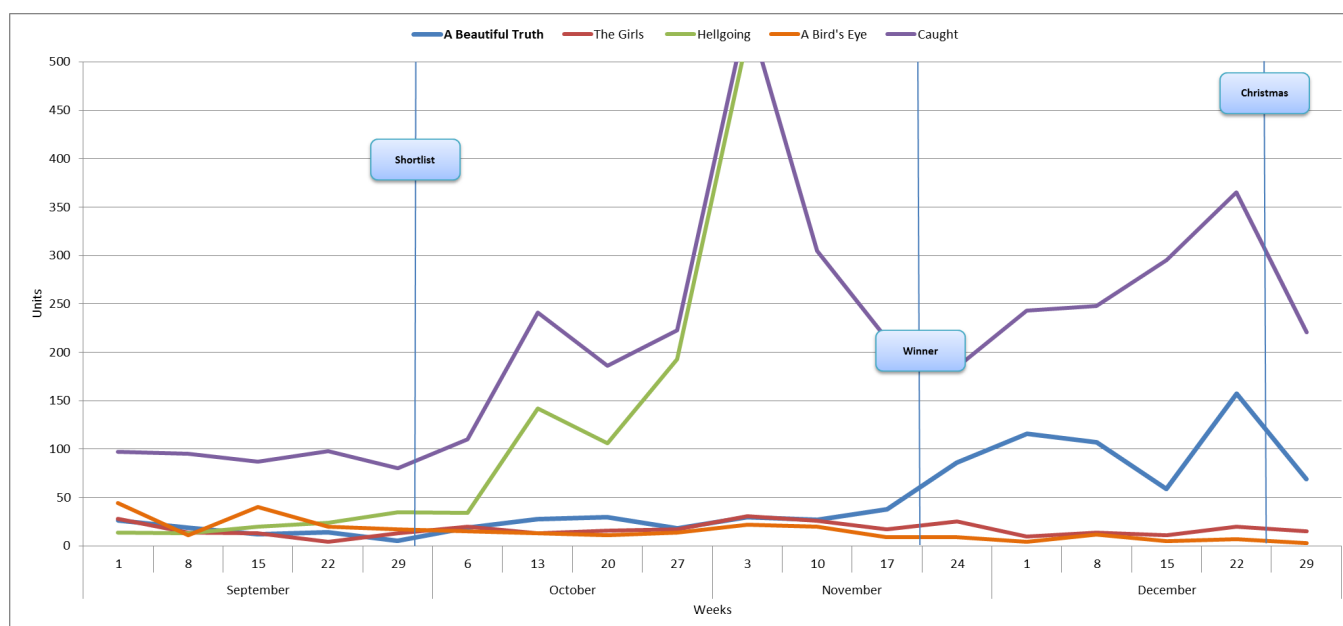
- *The Tinsmith* by Tim Bowling, Brindle & Glass Publishing, 9781926972435
- *Carnival* by Rawi Hage, House of Anansi Press, 9780887842351
- *Inside* by Alix Ohlin, House of Anansi Press, 9781770892064
- *The Purchase* by Linda Spalding, McClelland & Stewart, 9780771079351

SHORTLIST COMPARISON – 2013

Volume Sold for All Shortlist Titles and Winner

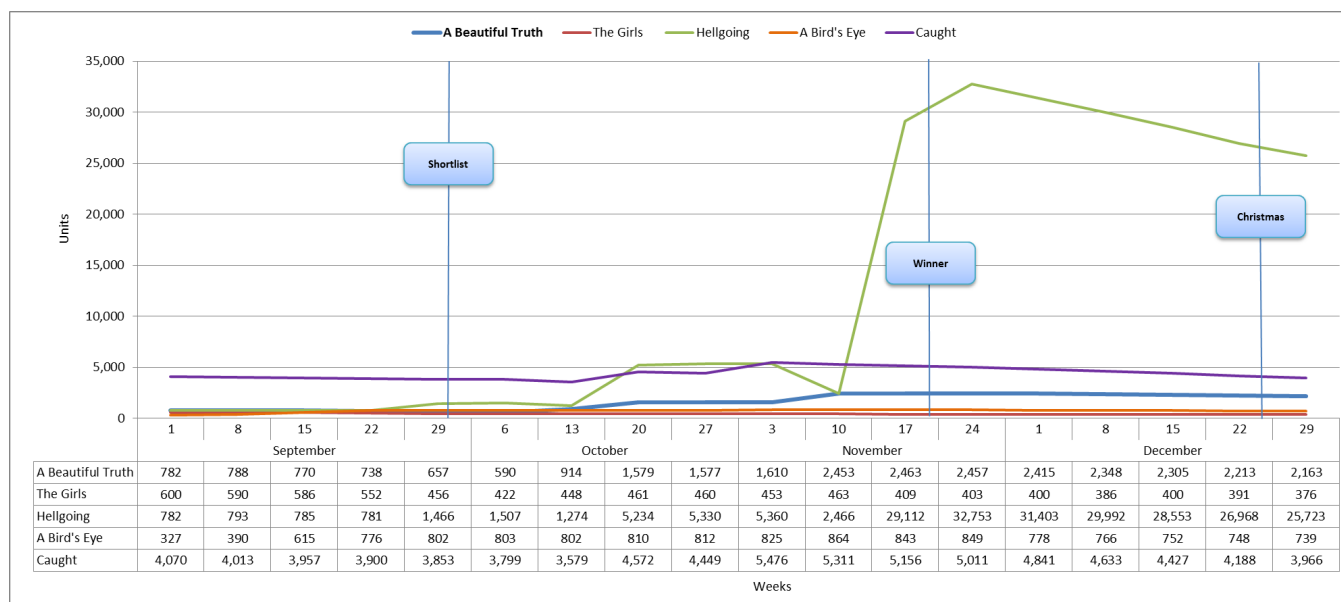


Expanded View of Sales Under 500 Units



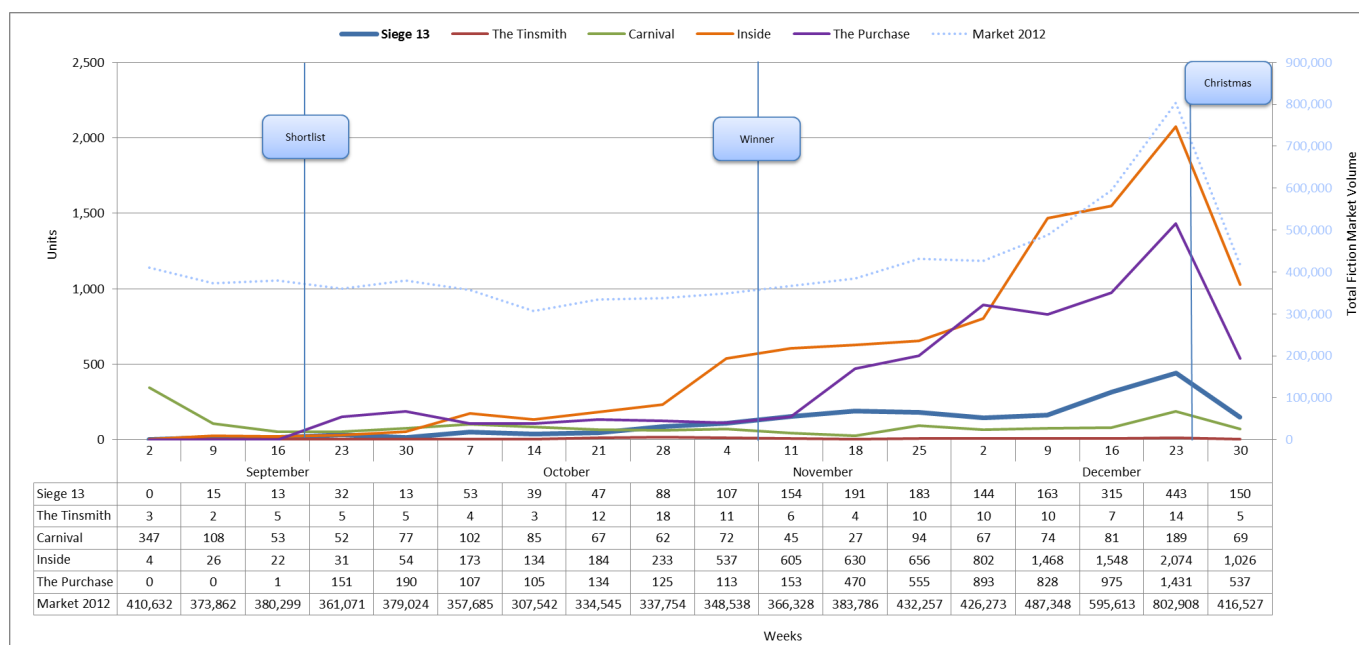
SHORTLIST COMPARISON – 2013 (CONTINUED)

Volume On Hand for All Shortlist Titles and Winner

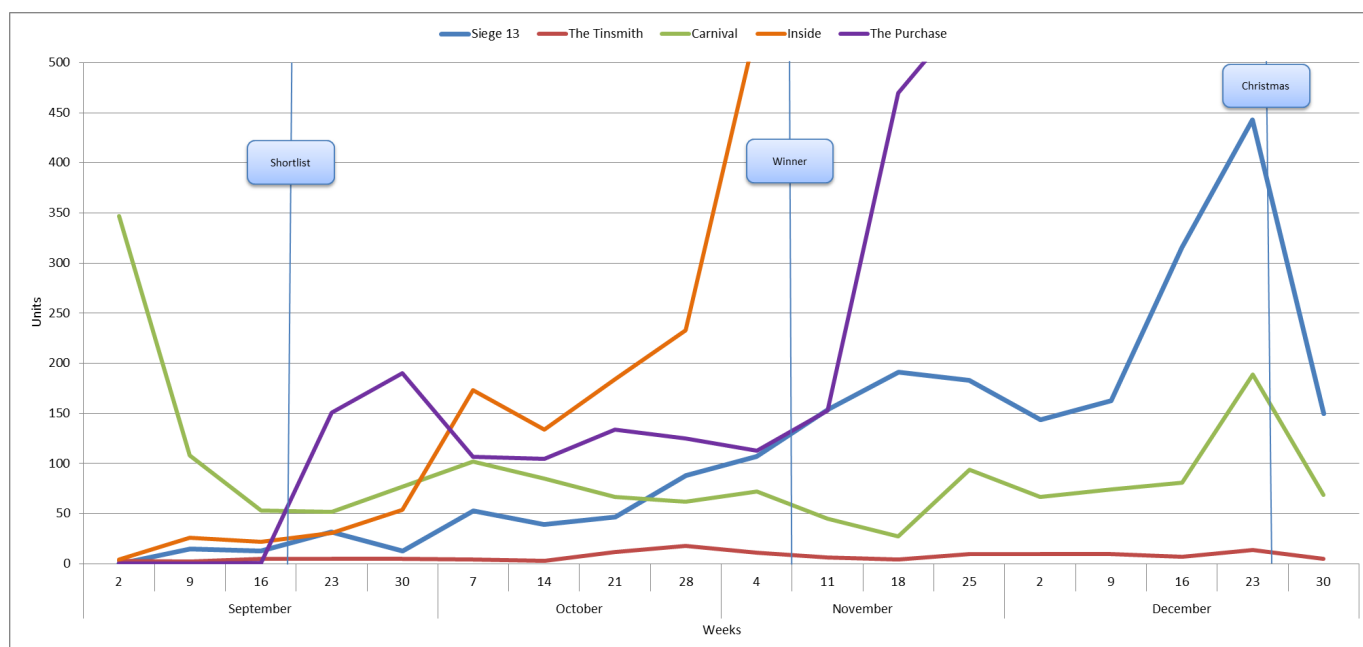


SHORTLIST COMPARISON – 2012

Volume Sold for All Shortlist Titles and Winner



Expanded View for Sales Under 500 Units



YEAR-OVER-YEAR WINNER COMPARISON 2008–2013

2013

Colin McAdam's *A Beautiful Truth*
 PENGUIN GROUP
 Hardcover Trade | 9780670066360 | \$30.00

2012

Tamas Doboz's *Siege 13*
 THOMAS ALLEN PUBLISHERS
 Trade Paperback | 9781771022040 | \$22.95

2011

Patrick deWitt's *The Sisters Brothers*
 HOUSE OF ANANSI PRESS
 Trade Paperback | 9781770890329 | \$22.95

2010

Emma Donoghue's *Room*
 HARPERCOLLINS PUBLISHERS LTD.
 Hardcover Trade | 9781554688319 | \$29.99

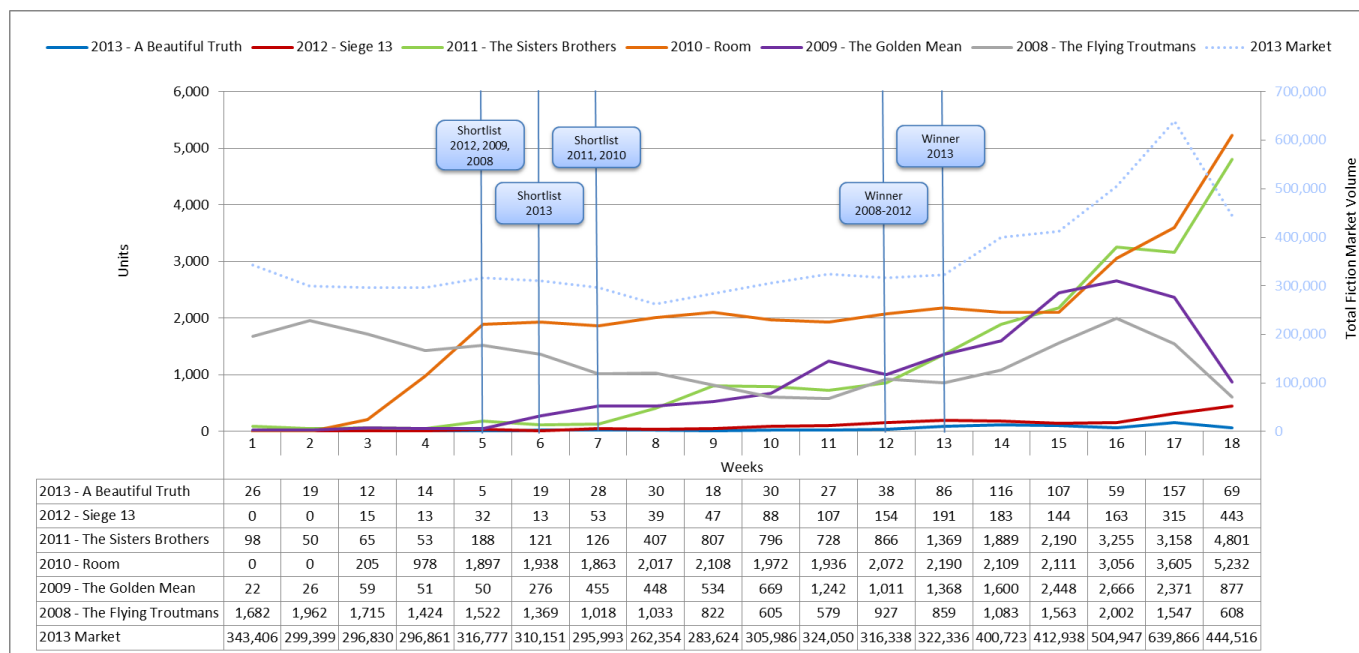
2009

Annabel Lyon's *The Golden Mean*
 RANDOM HOUSE OF CANADA
 Hardcover Trade | 9780307356208 | \$32.95

2008

Miriam Toews's *The Flying Troutmans*
 KNOPF CANADA
 Hardcover Trade | 9780307397492 | \$32.00

Volume Sold for Winning Titles



Expanded View for Sales Under 1,000 Units