



BNC RESEARCH

A RESEARCH REPORT BY BOOKNET CANADA

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01.2018

Canada Reads Congratulations, nominees!

What happens now?
What if you win?



**BOOKNET
CANADA**

PREPARED BY BNC STAFF
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Confidentiality

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Introduction

It's debating time! To the Canada Reads nominees and their publishers: congratulations to you and cheers to the Canadians who love to read. Along with a national broadcast comes added endorsement and publicity for your nominated titles, raising questions around planning. How will your nomination affect orders? Will you need to reprint? What should you do if your title wins?

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.

CBC's Canada Reads literary contest is highly publicized and widely followed. Its debate-style format and interactive components make it popular with the public. To get a sense of what to expect during the upcoming Canada Reads season, and to help publishers with stock and demand planning, we've created a trend analysis of last year's shortlist and winner as well as a comparison in sales and stock position of all the winners between 2012 and 2017.

Our research shows that interesting sales patterns follow the debates and the extensive media coverage that goes along with them.

This study includes:

- Week-over-week comparison of volume sold for all nominees
- Stock position by week: How many units were on hand during the Canada Reads season?
- On-order position by week: When do orders rise and fall, and by how much?
- Market trends by week, and percentage of market share for the nominated titles

The first section of this study compares the 2017 Canada Reads nominees by volume sold and includes a look at the overall fiction market sales during this time. The comparison by volume sold helps us understand how the award affects consumer behaviour, and how it relates to the rise and fall of the fiction market as a whole.

Next, we look at the 2017 nominated titles individually, showing volume sold, units on hand (OH), and units on order (OO). This shows us the retail demand and how retailers are predicting sales, especially during the holiday season.

Finally, the year-over-year comparison looks at the winners from 2012 to 2017, showing the impact of the competition over time and noting similarities and special cases. The volume-sold comparison shows how the competition is reaching readers, on-hand numbers show how retailers are predicting sales, and on-order information shows the retail demand.

Note:

- All dates used in the graphs represent week-ending dates.
- BNC calculates percent change based on average units sold three weeks prior to shortlist and winner announcements compared to units sold in the week following each announcement. These calculations are dependent on a given title's availability in the market.

Caveats

Based on publisher feedback, we estimate that BNC SalesData represents 85% of physical book industry sales. 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 most major independent bookstores, and many smaller ones but not all, any of which could be actively promoting an award winner. It also does not capture some specialty independent bookstores 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.

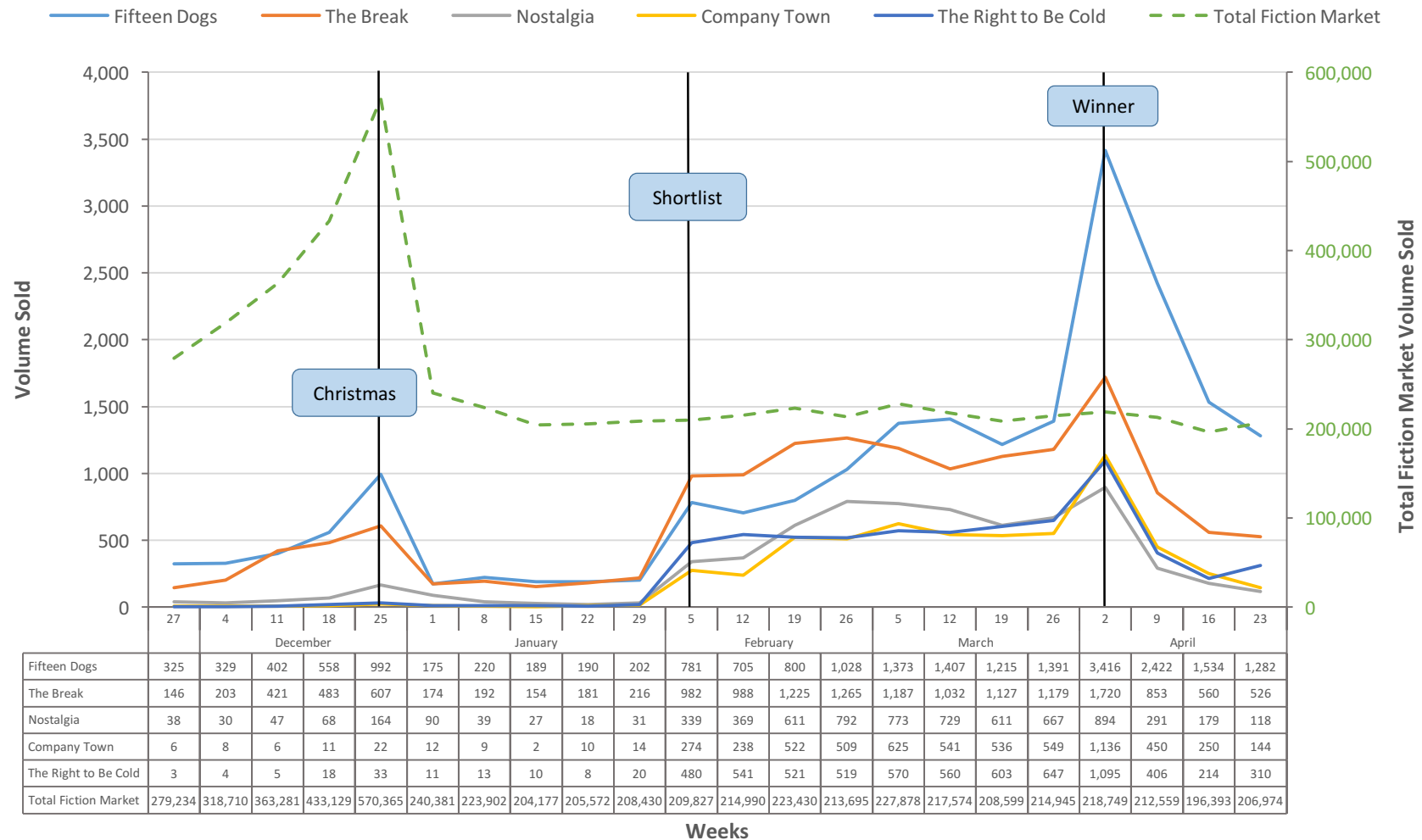
New booksellers have begun contributing to BNC SalesData since our first literary awards study, conducted in October 2006. Some changes seen in year-over-year sales figures may be due to the increased number of stores reporting sales, rather than a true increase in overall sales.

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

CBC Canada Reads 2017

Organized by the CBC
Nominations announced: Jan. 31, 2017
Debate week: March 27-30, 2017

Volume Sold



Shortlist announcement (Jan. 31, 2017):

- All five nominated titles experienced some sales increase the week following the shortlist announcement, with an average increase in sales of approximately 1,775%. These sales continued to increase in anticipation of the debate week.

Winner announcement (March 30, 2017):

- **Nominees:** Sales peaked during the week of the debates. Immediately following the winner announcement, all four eliminated titles saw a decrease in sales; the average decrease for all titles following the debate was 10%.
- Interestingly, unit sales do not reflect the order in which titles were eliminated. Despite being the first title to be eliminated, *The Break* experienced high sales, second only to the winning title, likely influenced by publicity from other award nominations.
- **Winner:** Debate-week sales for the winning title were more than double its sales from the previous week. After the debate, *Fifteen Dogs* enjoyed above-average sales, with an 81% increase.
- Both *Fifteen Dogs* and *The Break* experienced higher sales than the other three nominated titles prior to the shortlist announcement. Sales for the two titles were likely influenced by publicity from being nominated for or winning other awards: *Fifteen Dogs* was the winner of the 2015 Giller Prize and the 2015 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize, while *The Break* was shortlisted for both the 2016 Governor General's Literary Award and the 2016 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize.

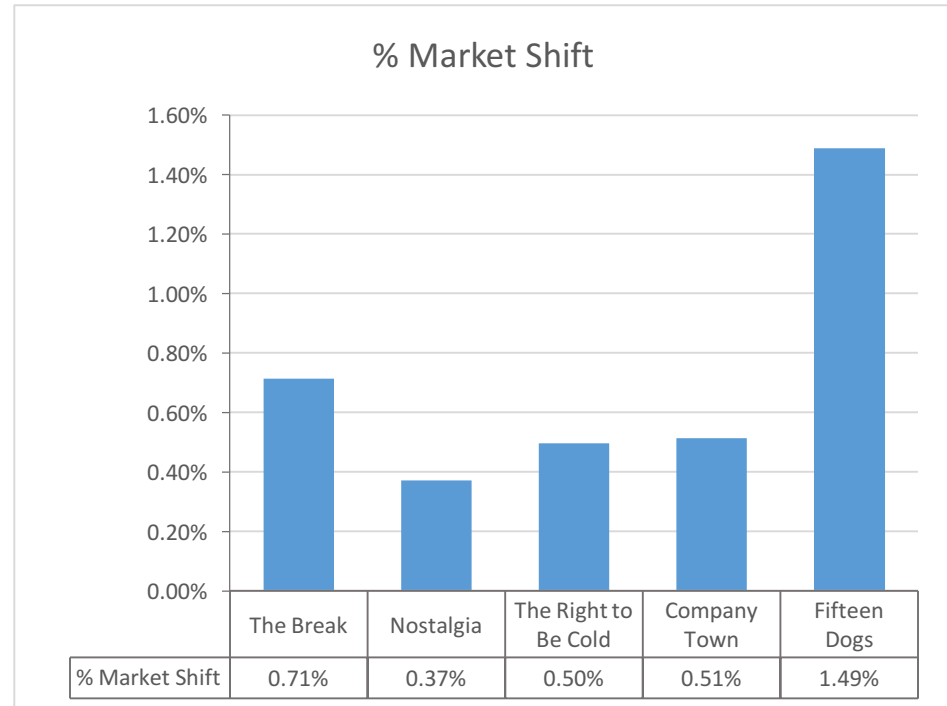
2017 Nominees

Market Share Shift

This bar graph compares the shift in market share during debate week for all nominees, and helps us see whether there is a connection between sales and the order a title was voted off in the debates.

Percent of market share during debate week was compared with a baseline market share from thirteen weeks earlier to calculate the shift each title saw during debate week. *The Break* was voted off on day one, *Nostalgia* on day two, and *The Right to Be Cold* on day three. *Company Town* was eliminated on the final day, leaving *Fifteen Dogs* the 2017 winner.

This year's competition showed little correlation between a title's rank in the competition and market share shift. While *Fifteen Dogs* experienced the largest increase in market share, *The Break* experienced the second-highest, despite being the first title eliminated from the competition.

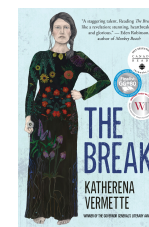


Nominee

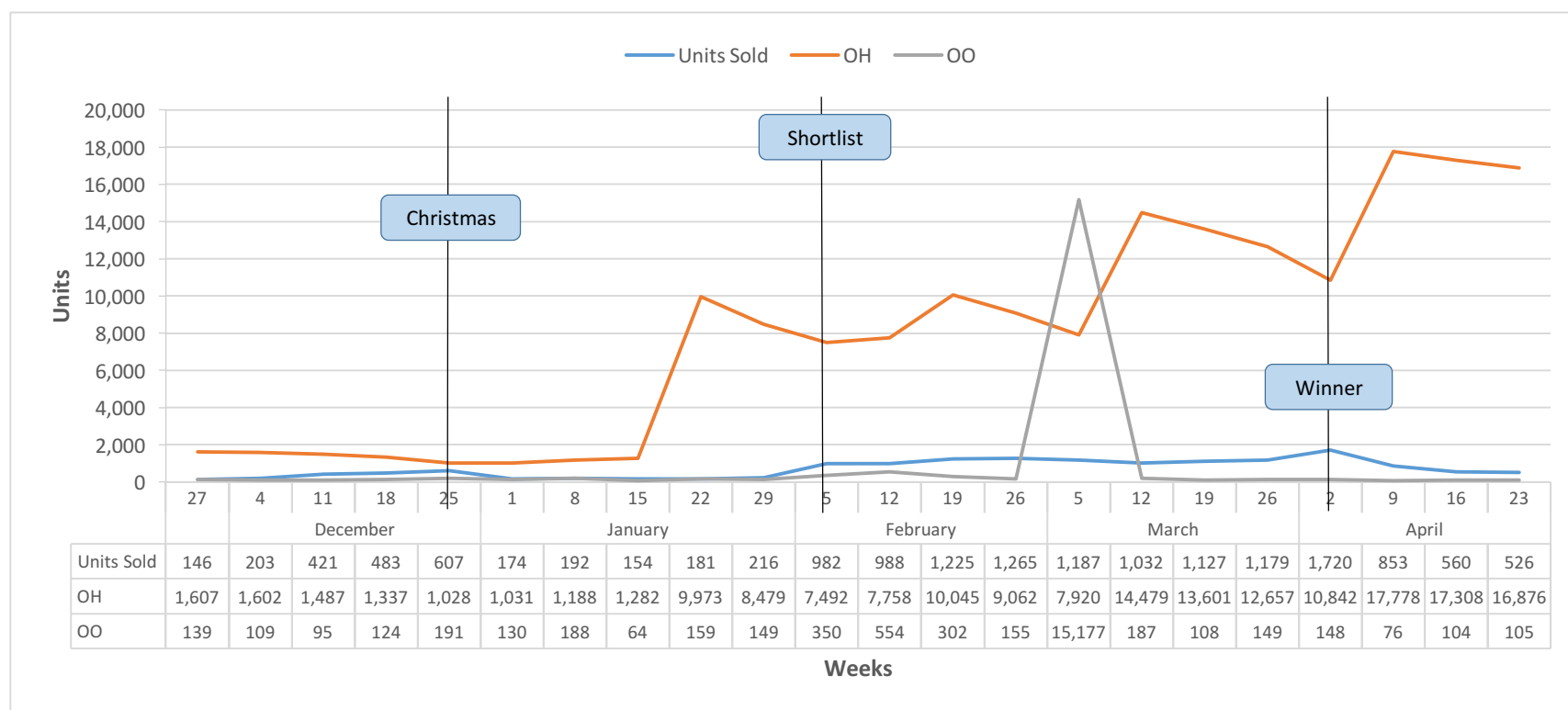
Katherena Vermette's *The Break*

Defended by Candy Palmater

House of Anansi Press
Trade Paperback
9781487001117
\$22.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



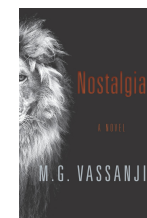
Nominee

M.G. Vassanji's *Nostalgia*

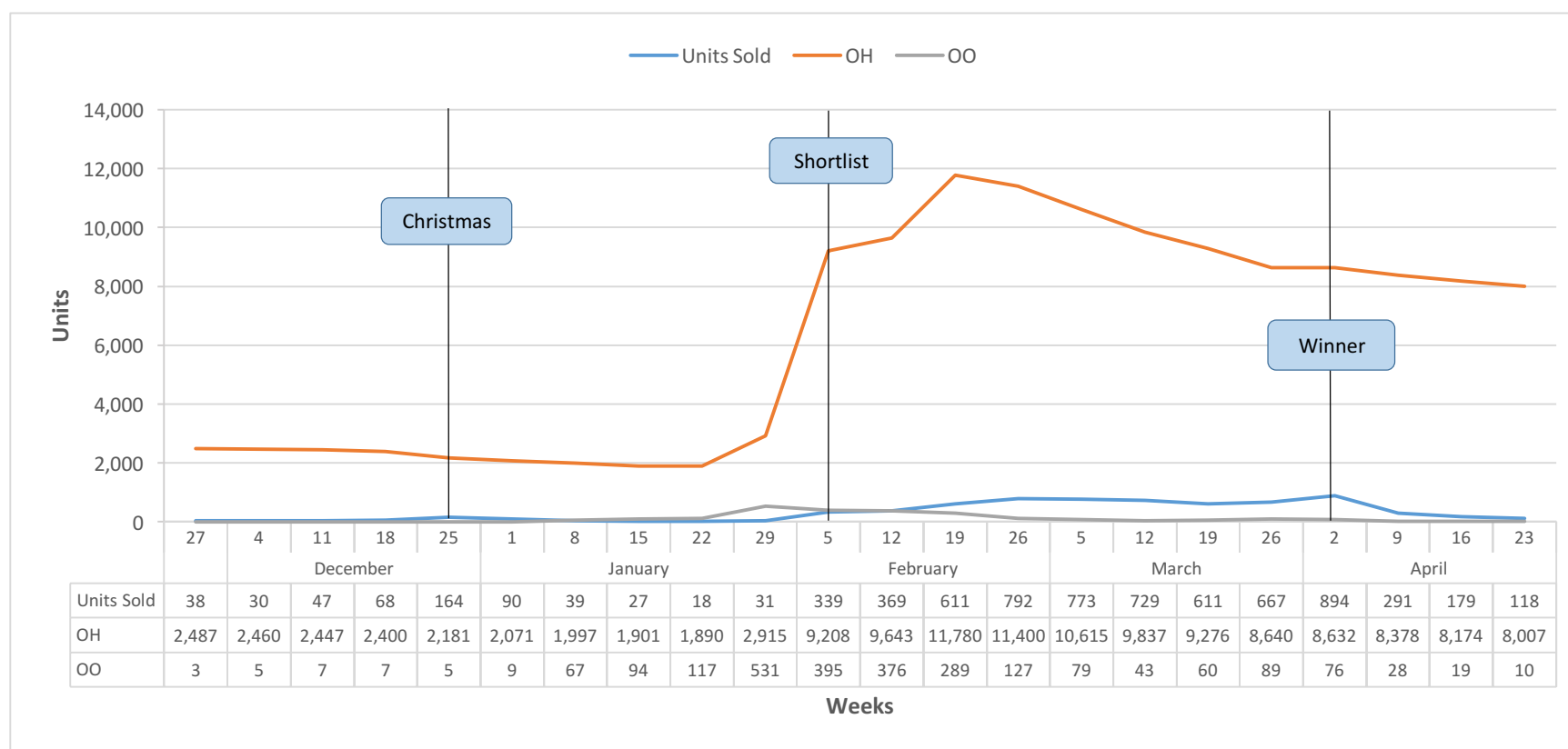
Defended by Jody Mitic

Doubleday Canada
Hardcover Trade
9780385667166
\$29.95

Trade Paperback
9780385667173
\$21.00



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



Nominee

Sheila Watt-Cloutier's *The Right to Be Cold*

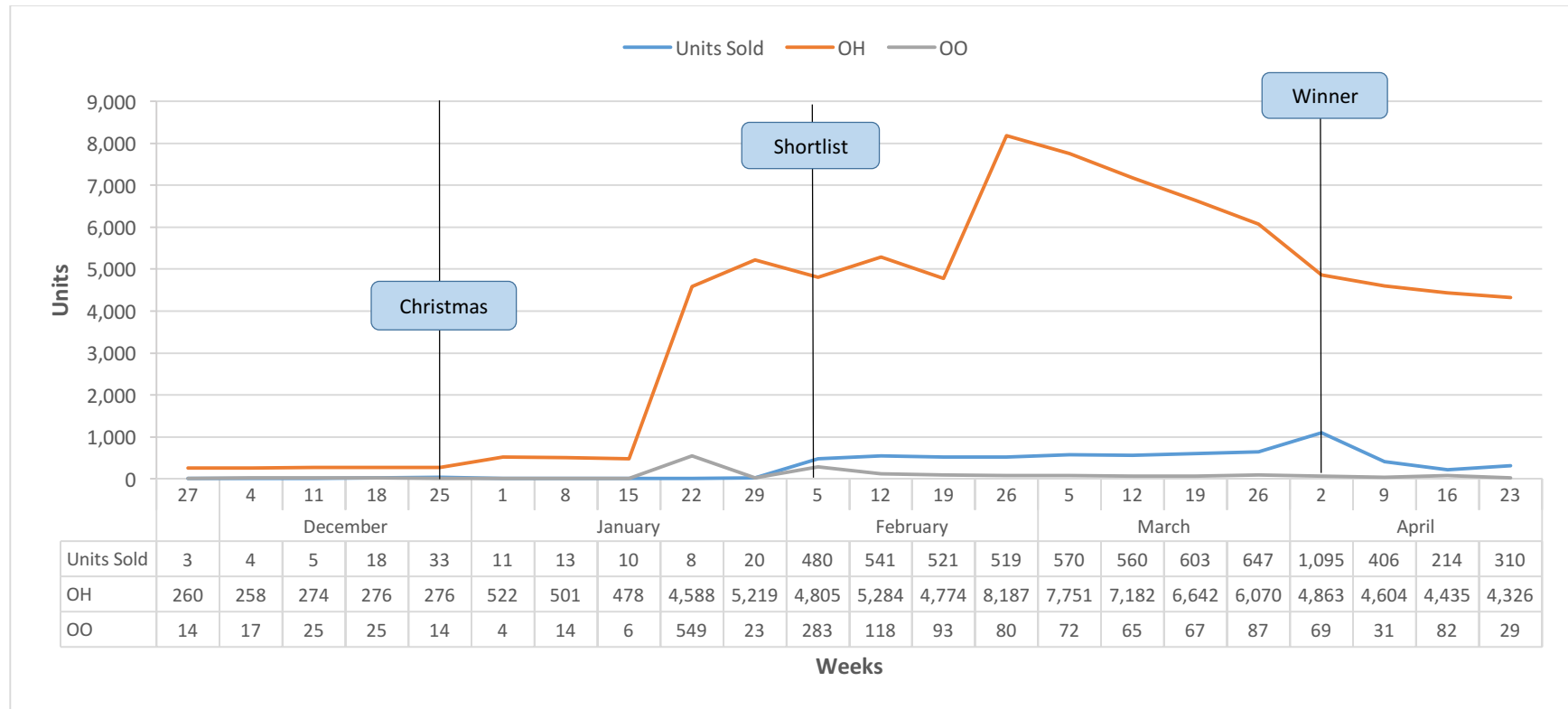
Defended by Chantal Kreviazuk

Penguin Canada
Trade Paperback
9780143187646
\$22.00

Hardcover Trade
9780670067107
\$32.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



Nominee

Madeline Ashby's *Company Town*

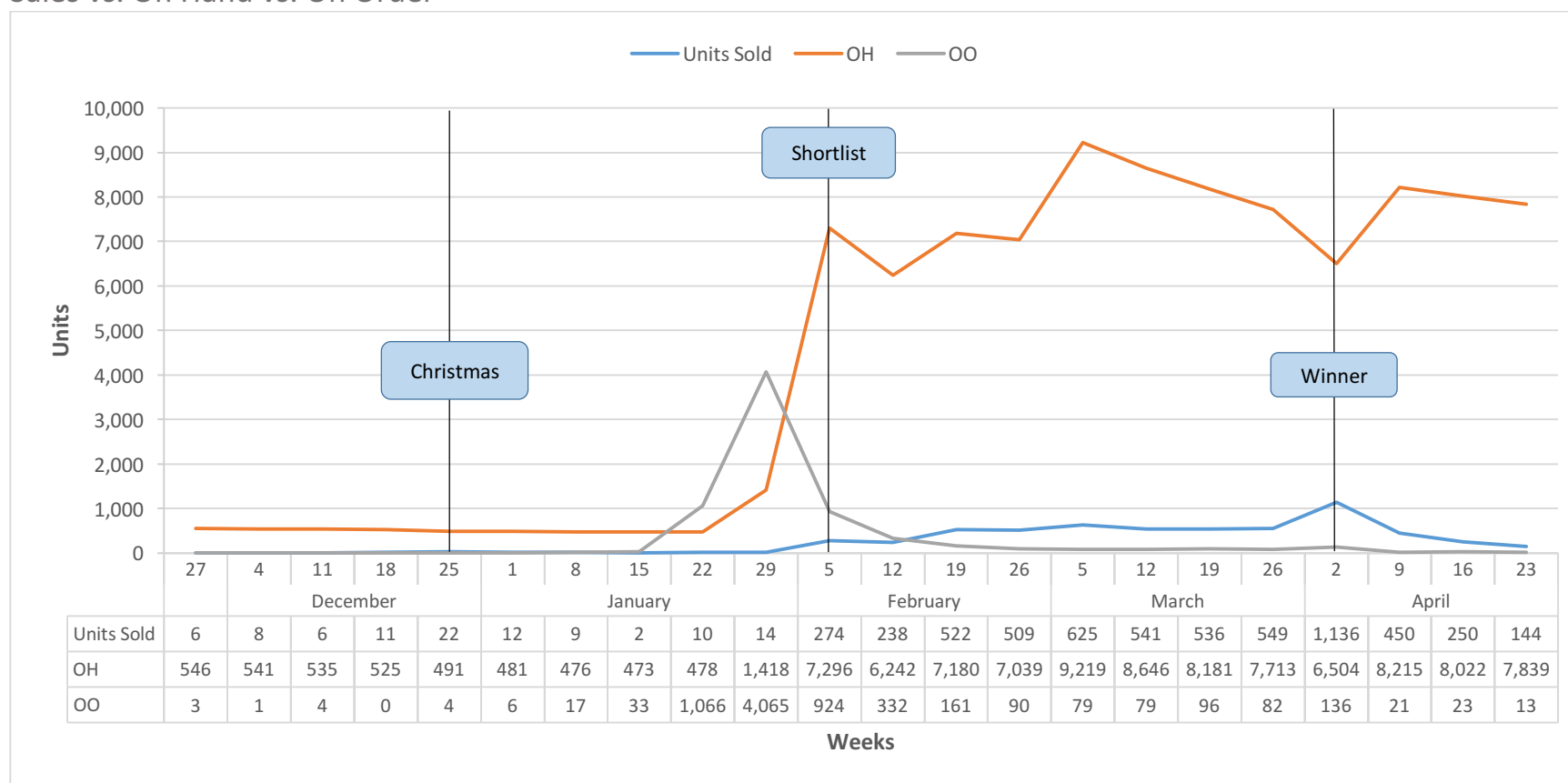
Defended by Measha Brueggergosman

Tor Books
Hardcover Trade
9780765382900
\$34.99

Trade Paperback
9780765398871
\$20.99



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order

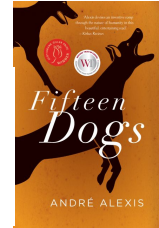


Winner

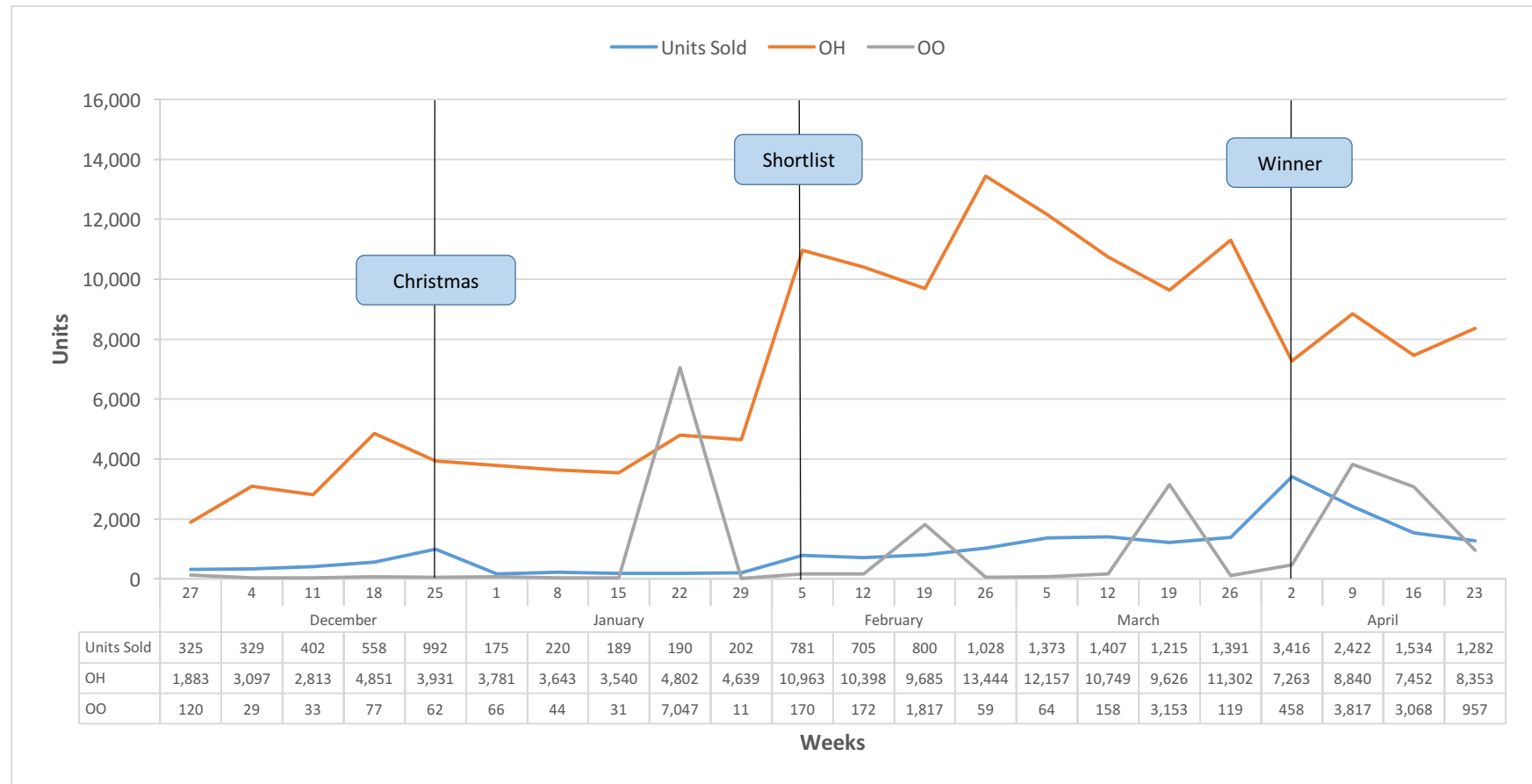
André Alexis's *Fifteen Dogs*

Defended by Humble the Poet

Coach House Books
Trade Paperback
9781552453056
\$19.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



Winner Comparison 2012-2017

2017

André Alexis's *Fifteen Dogs*
Coach House Books
Trade Paperback | 9781552453056 | \$19.95

2014*

Joseph Boyden's *The Orenda*
Penguin Group Canada
Hardcover Trade | 9780670064182 | \$32.00
Trade Paperback | 9780143174165 | \$22.00

2016

Lawrence Hill's *The Illegal*
HarperCollins Publishers
Hardcover Trade | 9781554683833 | \$34.99
Trade Paperback | 9781554683840 | \$24.99

2013*

Lisa Moore's *February*
House of Anansi Press
Trade Paperback | 9780887849626 | \$19.95

2015*

Kim Thuy's *Ru*
Random House of Canada
Trade Paperback | 9780307359711 | \$18.95
Trade Paperback | 9780345816146 | \$17.95

2012*

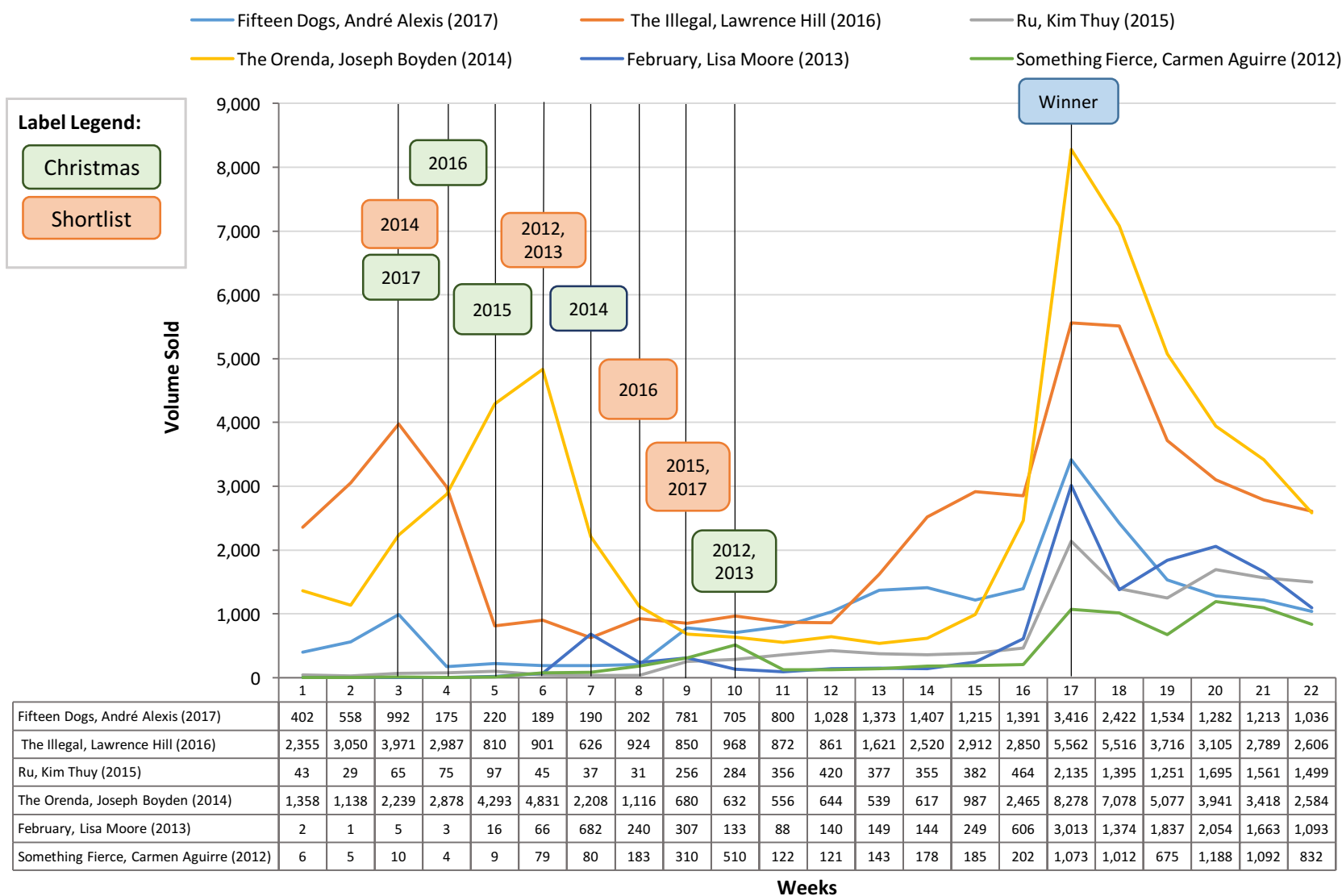
Carmen Aguirre's *Something Fierce*
Douglas & McIntyre
Hardcover Trade | 9781553654629 | \$32.95
Trade Paperback | 9781771000369 | \$21.00

**Years where the program allowed the public to submit nominees and vote in polls prior to the debate.*

The Canada Reads timeline has altered over the past few years. Previously, the shortlist announcement occurred prior to the holiday season, with sales typically increasing after the shortlist announcement and again leading into the holiday season. For the past two years, the long list has been announced prior to Christmas, and the shortlist has been announced at the end of January. Although this eliminates potential sales during the holiday season, it makes evident that the climb in sales following the shortlist announcement speaks to the influence of Canada Reads, as the overall market is in a post-holiday decline.

Despite these changes, sales trends remain consistent. Sales are level for weeks leading up to the debate, followed by an increase in sales during debate week. Winning titles tend to experience a large spike following the debate week, and then continue to see above-average sales over the weeks after the winner announcement.

Volume Sold – Winner Comparison



Conclusion

Year after year, data shows that CBC's Canada Reads literary competition has a significant impact on book sales in the country. By analyzing each year's sales trends for the nominated and winning titles, we can fairly conclude that:

- Being shortlisted for Canada Reads has a notable and consistent effect on the market share of a title. In 2017, as with previous years, sales increased significantly for all five nominated titles following the shortlist announcement. As the shortlist announcement in 2016 and 2017 occurred after the holiday season, when overall consumer behaviour is on a decline, the positive increase in sales can be attested to the publicity garnered from the shortlist announcement.
- Debate week has a positive impact on sales for all nominees. In previous years, nominees voted off earlier in the week experienced less of an impact than those who made it to the end of the week. This trend was not observed in 2017, however, as *The Break*, the title voted off on day one of the debate, saw the second-highest market shift after the winning title. *The Break* was likely influenced by nominations for other awards, such as the 2016 Governor General's Literary Award and the 2016 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize.
- Like *The Break*, André Alexis's *Fifteen Dogs* experienced significantly higher sales than the other three nominated titles during mid-December, prior to the shortlist announcement. This was likely a result of the influence of other awards: *Fifteen Dogs* was the winner of the 2015 Giller Prize and the 2015 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize, along with being a finalist for the 2015 Toronto Book Awards. The lasting impact from the publicity these awards can garner is felt, as these prizes were won more than a year prior to the shortlist announcement for Canada Reads.