



BNC RESEARCH

A RESEARCH REPORT BY BOOKNET CANADA

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09.2017

The Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction Congratulations, nominees!

**What happens now?
What if you win?**



**BOOKNET
CANADA**

PREPARED BY BNC STAFF
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Introduction

Congratulations, one of your books has been nominated for a literary award! Will this national recognition translate into increased orders and sales? 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 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.

This study examines sales and order trends for titles shortlisted for the Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction. To get a sense of what to expect during the award season, and to help nominees 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 from 2011 to 2016.

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 award season?
- On-order position by week: When do orders rise and fall, and by how much?

The first section of this study compares the 2016 shortlisted titles by volume sold and includes a look at overall sales in the Non-Fiction market during this time. The comparison by volume sold helps us understand how the award affects consumer behavior, and how it relates to the rise and fall of the Non-Fiction market as a whole.

Next, we look at the 2016 shortlisted titles individually, showing volume sold, units on hand (OH), and units on order (OO) throughout the Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize timeline. 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 award winners from 2011 to 2016, showing the impact of the award over time and noting similarities and special cases. 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.

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 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 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.

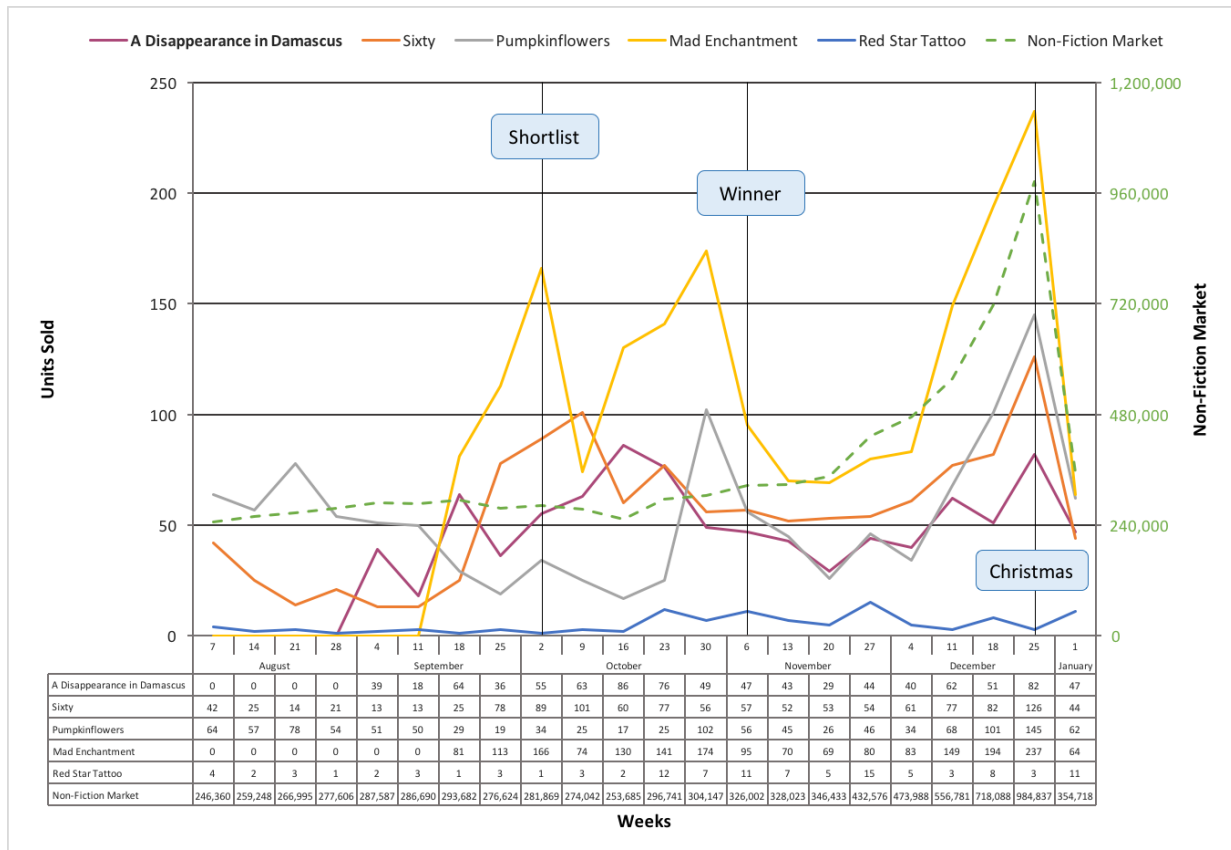
New booksellers have begun contributing to BNC SalesData since our first literary awards study, conducted in October 2006. Some changes seen in year-over-year sales figures may be due to the increased number of stores reporting sales, rather than a true increase in overall sales.

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

The Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction 2016

Organized by The Writers' Trust of Canada
Nominations announced: Sept. 28, 2016
Winners announced: Nov. 2, 2016

Volume Sold for All Shortlist Titles and Winner



Shortlist announcement (Sept. 28, 2016):

Overall, most titles experienced a slight increase after the shortlist announcement. *Sixty* experienced the greatest sales increase of 161%.

Winner announcement (Nov. 2, 2016):

Four of the five shortlisted titles, including the winning title, *A Disappearance in Damascus*, experienced an immediate decline in sales after the winner announcement, while *Red Star Tattoo* saw no change. *Mad Enchantment* outsold the other four shortlisted titles. Sales for the winning title peaked after the shortlist announcement and before the winner announcement, and a small increase in sales can be observed the weeks leading up to the holiday season.

Nominee

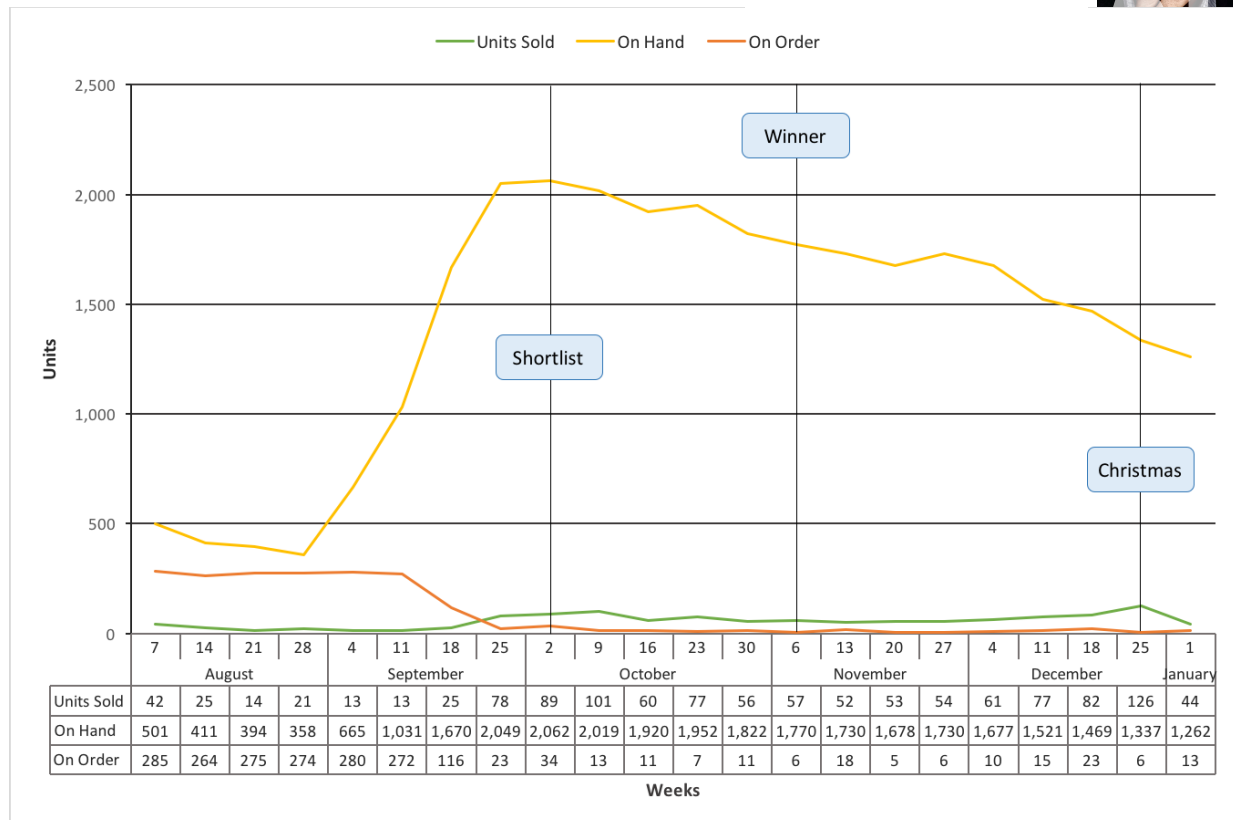
Ian Brown's *Sixty*

*The Beginning of the End or the End of the Beginning?:
A Diary of My Sixty-First Year*

Random House Canada
Hardcover Trade
9780307362841
\$29.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



Ian Brown's *Sixty* was also shortlisted for the RBC Taylor Prize on Jan. 13, 2016.

Nominee

Matti Friedman's *Pumpkinflowers*

An Israeli Soldier's Story

McClelland & Stewart

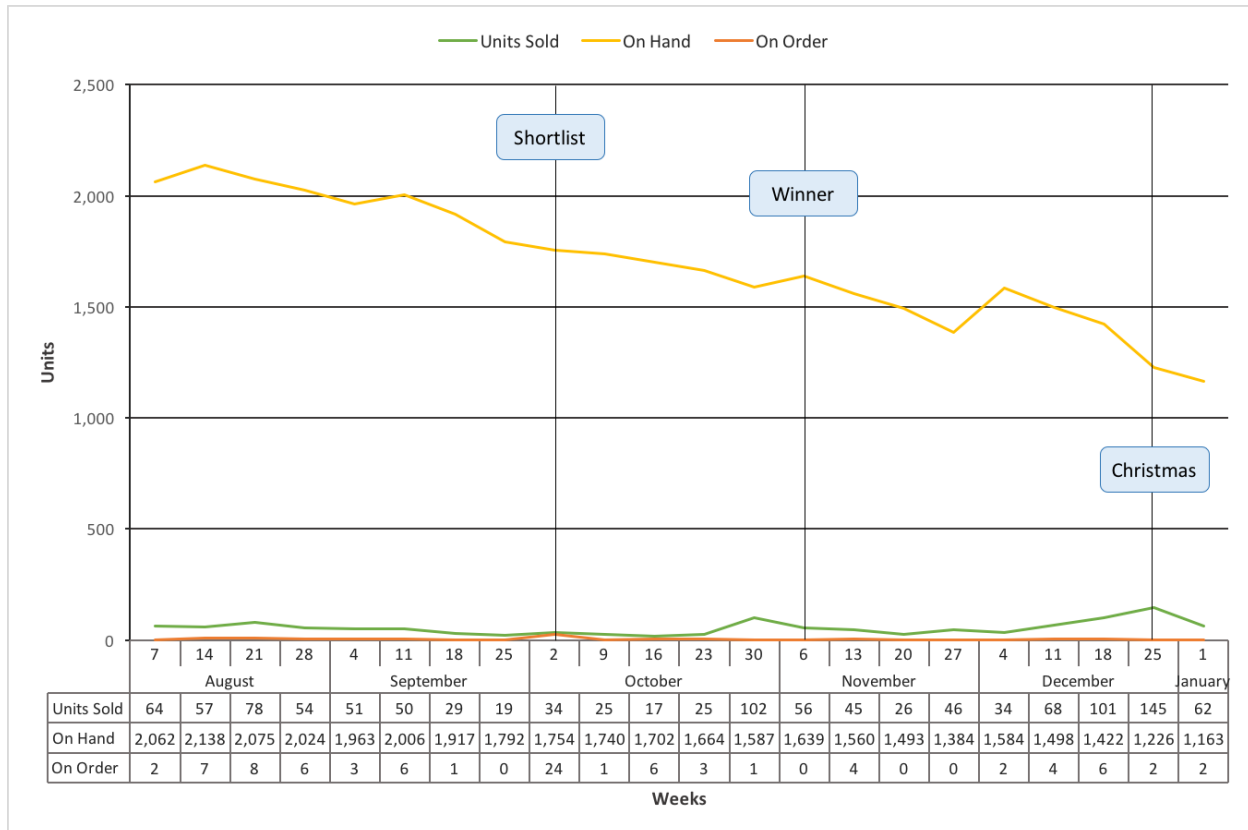
Hardcover Trade

9780771036903

\$32.00



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



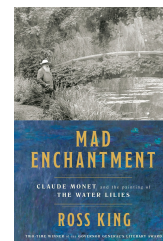
Matti Friedman's *Pumpkinflowers* would go on to be shortlisted for the RCB Taylor Prize on Jan. 11, 2017, and longlisted for British Columbia's National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction in 2017.

Nominee

Ross King's *Mad Enchantment*

Claude Monet and the Painting of the Water Lilies

Bond Street Books
Hardcover Trade
9780385684620
\$39.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



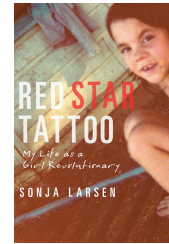
Mad Enchantment would go on to be longlisted for British Columbia's National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction Prize in 2017, and to win the RBC Taylor Prize on March 6, 2017.

Nominee

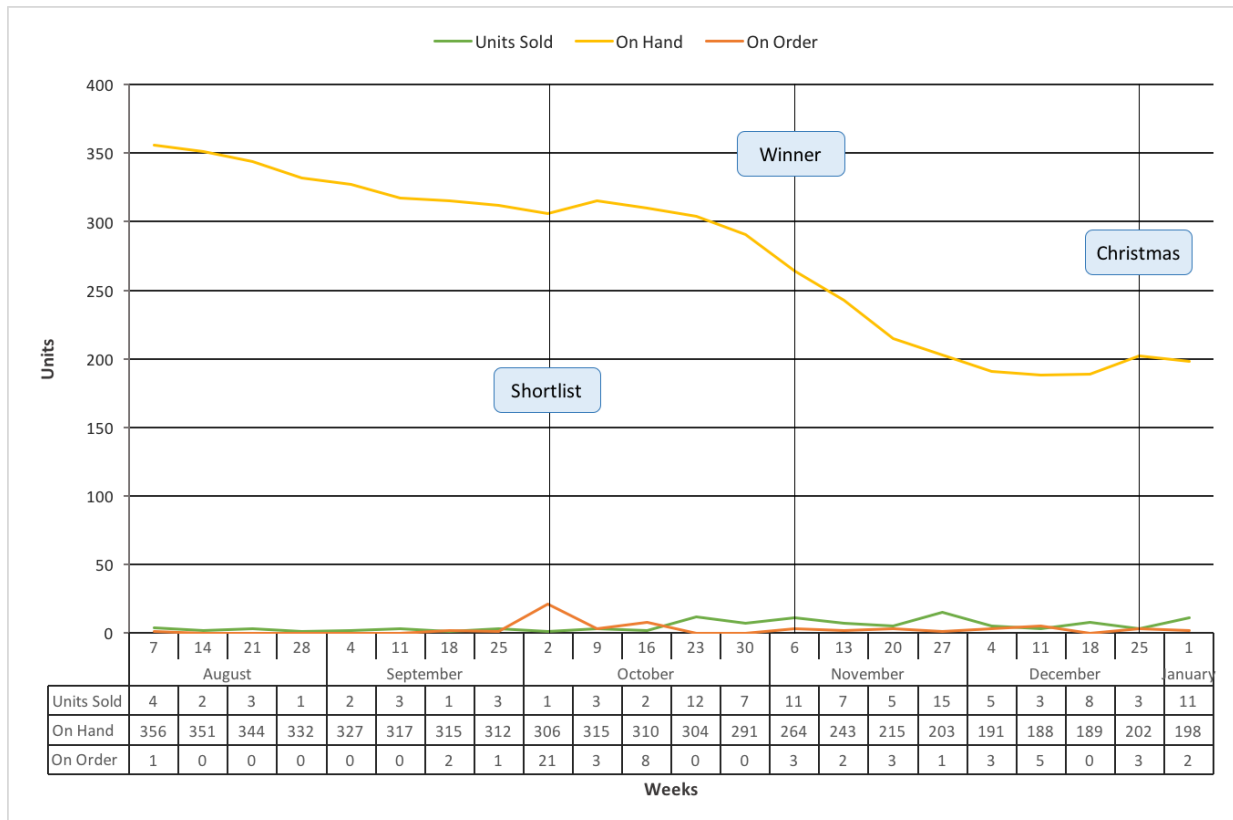
Sonja Larsen's *Red Star Tattoo*

My Life as a Girl Revolutionary

Random House Canada
Hardcover Trade
9780345815279
\$32.00



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



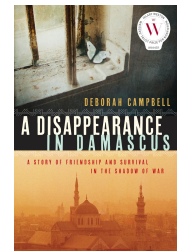
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Winner

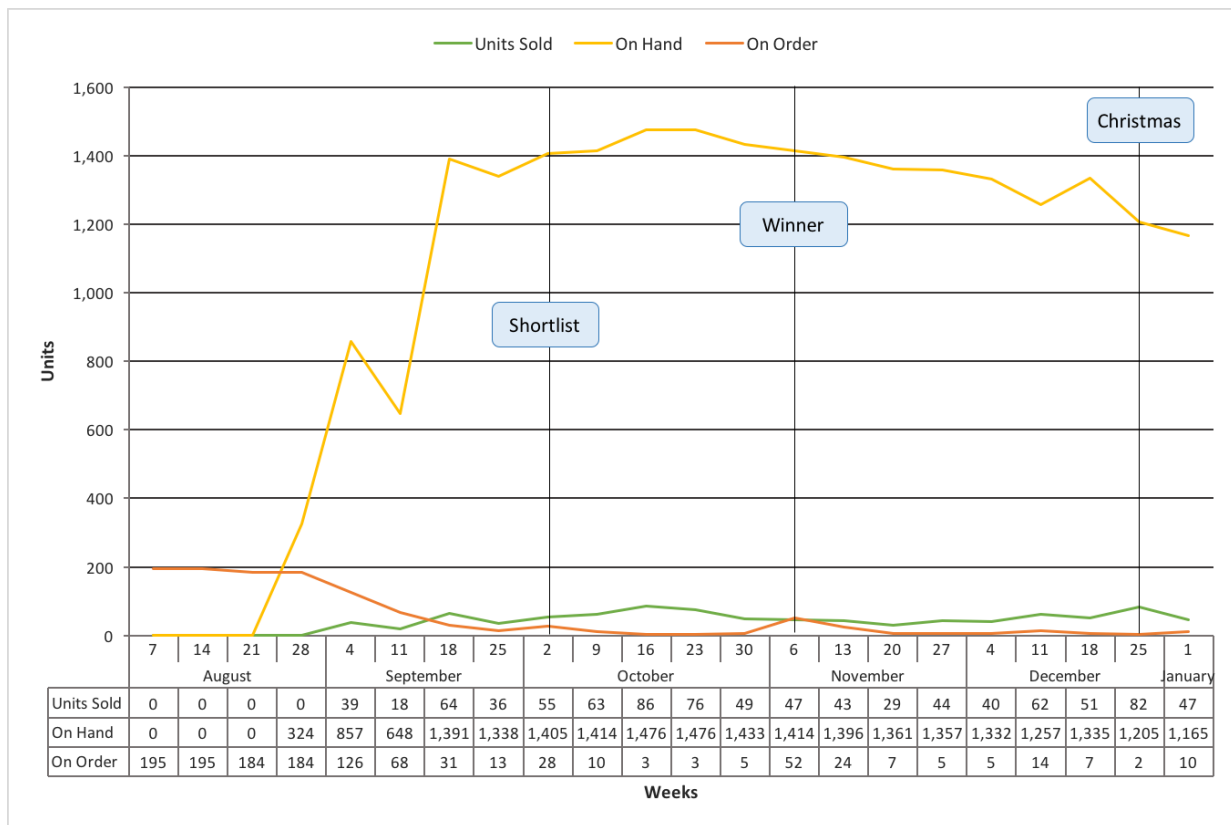
Deborah Campbell's *A Disappearance in Damascus*

A Story of Friendship and Survival in the Shadow of War

Knopf Canada
Hardcover Trade
9780345809292
\$32.00



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



In addition to winning the Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction, Deborah Campbell's *A Disappearance in Damascus* was also longlisted for British Columbia's National Award for Canadian Non-Fiction in 2016. *A Disappearance in Damascus* would go on to win the BC Book Prizes' Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize in 2017.

Year-over-year Comparison 2011-2016

2016

Deborah Campbell's *A Disappearance in Damascus*
Knopf Canada
Hardcover Trade | 9780345809292 | \$32.00

2015

Rosemary Sullivan's *Stalin's Daughter*
HarperCollins Canada Ltd
Hardcover Trade | 9781443414425 | \$34.99

2014

Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything*
Knopf Canada
Hardcover Trade | 9780307401991 | \$36.95

2013

Graeme Smith's *The Dogs Are Eating Them Now*
Knopf Canada
Hardcover Trade | 9780307397805 | \$32.00

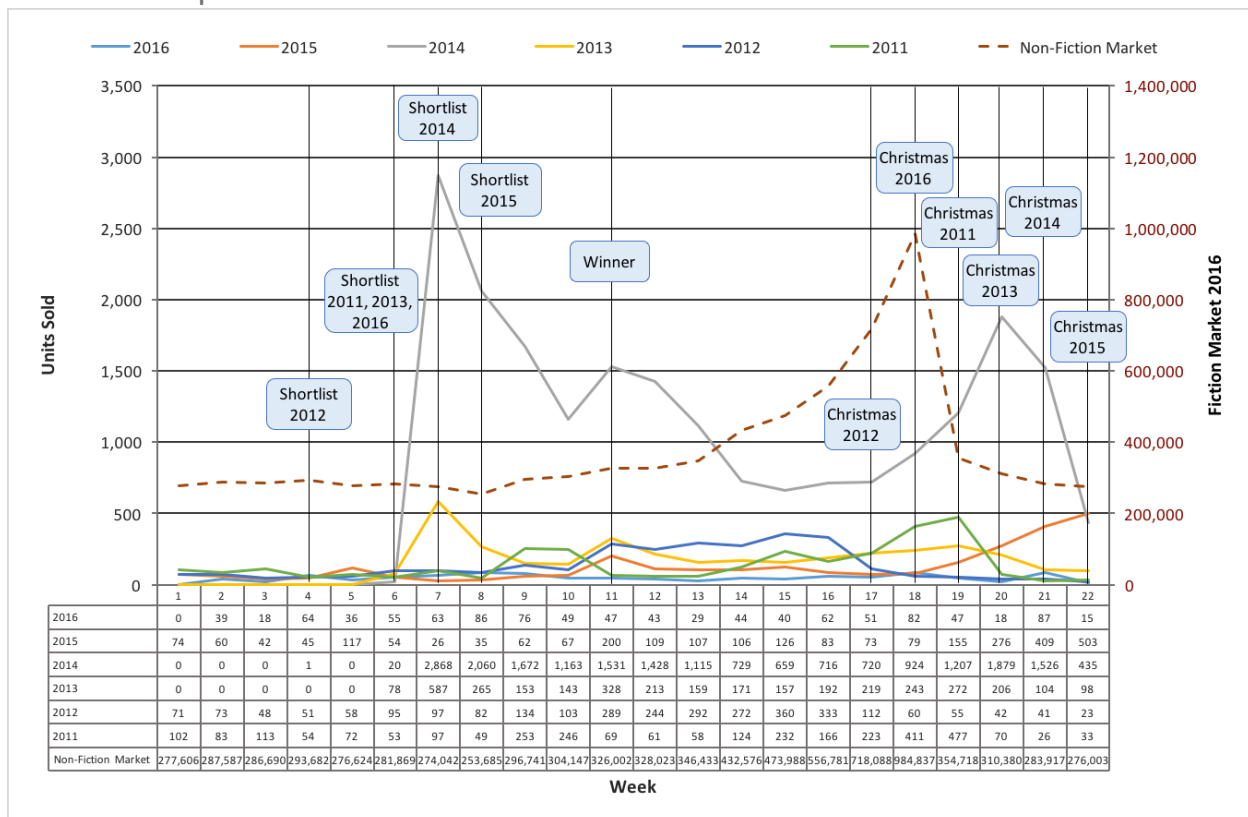
2012

Candace Savage's *A Geography of Blood*
Greystone Books, Ltd.
Hardcover Trade | 9781553652342 | \$26.95

2011

Charles Foran's *Mordecai*
Knopf Canada
Hardcover Trade | 9780676979633 | \$39.95
Trade Paperback | 9780676979657 | \$24.95

Winner Comparison – Volume Sold



The winning titles in 2012, 2013, and 2015 all experienced a sales increase following the winner announcement, whereas the winning titles in 2011, 2014, and 2016 all saw a decrease in sales. As three of the six winning titles — 2013, 2014, and 2016 — have a publication date just before the shortlist announcement, it is difficult to assess the effect of the award on sales, as it does not allow us to gauge an average sale week for those titles. Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything*, the 2014 winner, sold significantly more units than the winners from any other year.

Conclusion

Our analysis leads us to conclude that the Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction continues to have a positive impact on Canadian book sales:

- Four of the five nominated titles in 2016 saw an increase in sales immediately following the shortlist announcement.
- Although sales for the five nominated titles in 2016 saw a decrease the week immediately following the winner announcement, sales climbed the weeks leading up to the holiday season.
- The 2014 winner, *This Changes Everything*, sold more than 19 times the volume of sales of *A Disappearance in Damascus* sold over the 22-week period observed. Despite not winning, three other shortlisted titles in 2016 all sold more units than *A Disappearance in Damascus*, suggesting that being shortlisted for the award is enough to influence sales.
- There is no discernable sales trend for the winning titles. While some winners experience a slight bump in sales the week of the winner announcement or the week after the announcement, others experience a decline in sales.