



BNC RESEARCH

A RESEARCH REPORT BY BOOKNET CANADA

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10.2017

The Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize Congratulations, nominees!

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



**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.

This study examines sales and order trends for titles shortlisted for the 2016 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize. 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 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize shortlisted titles by volume sold and includes a look at overall sales in the 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 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 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction 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 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.

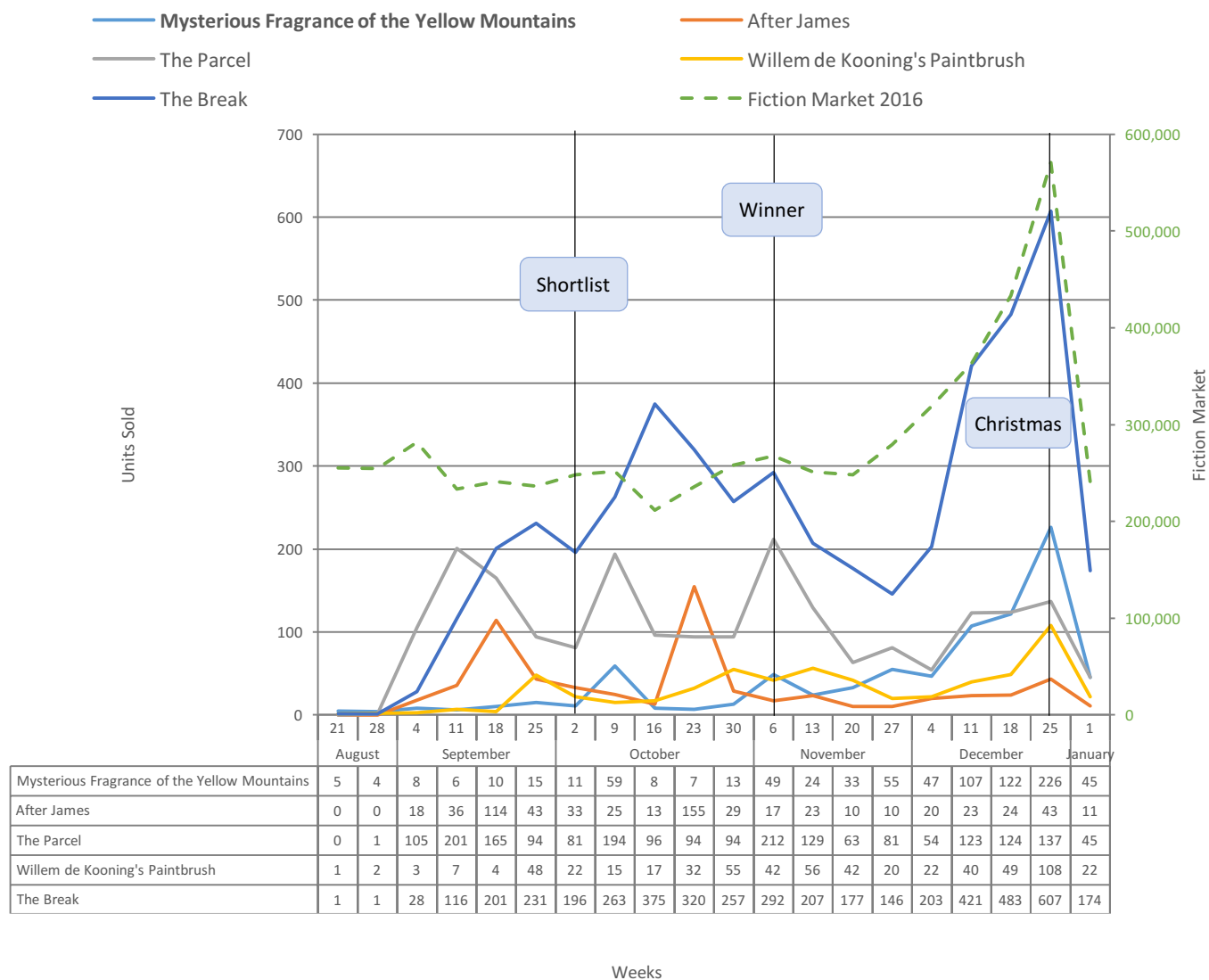
New booksellers have begun contributing to BNC SalesData since our first literary awards study, conducted in October 2006. Some changes seen in year-over-year sales figures may be due to the increased number of stores reporting sales, rather than a true increase in overall sales.

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

Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize 2016

Organized by The Writers' Trust of Canada
Nominations announced: Sept. 21, 2016
Winners announced: Nov. 2, 2016

Volume Sold for All Shortlist Titles and Winner



*Please note: The Fiction Market, represented by the green dashed line, is on a third axis.

Shortlist announcement (Sept. 21, 2016):

The winning title, *Mysterious Fragrance of the Yellow Mountains*, experienced a 471% increase in sales following the shortlist announcement, but actual units sold were minimal. *The Parcel* and *The Break* also saw positive increases in sales of 27% and 44%, respectively.

Winner announcement (Nov. 2, 2016):

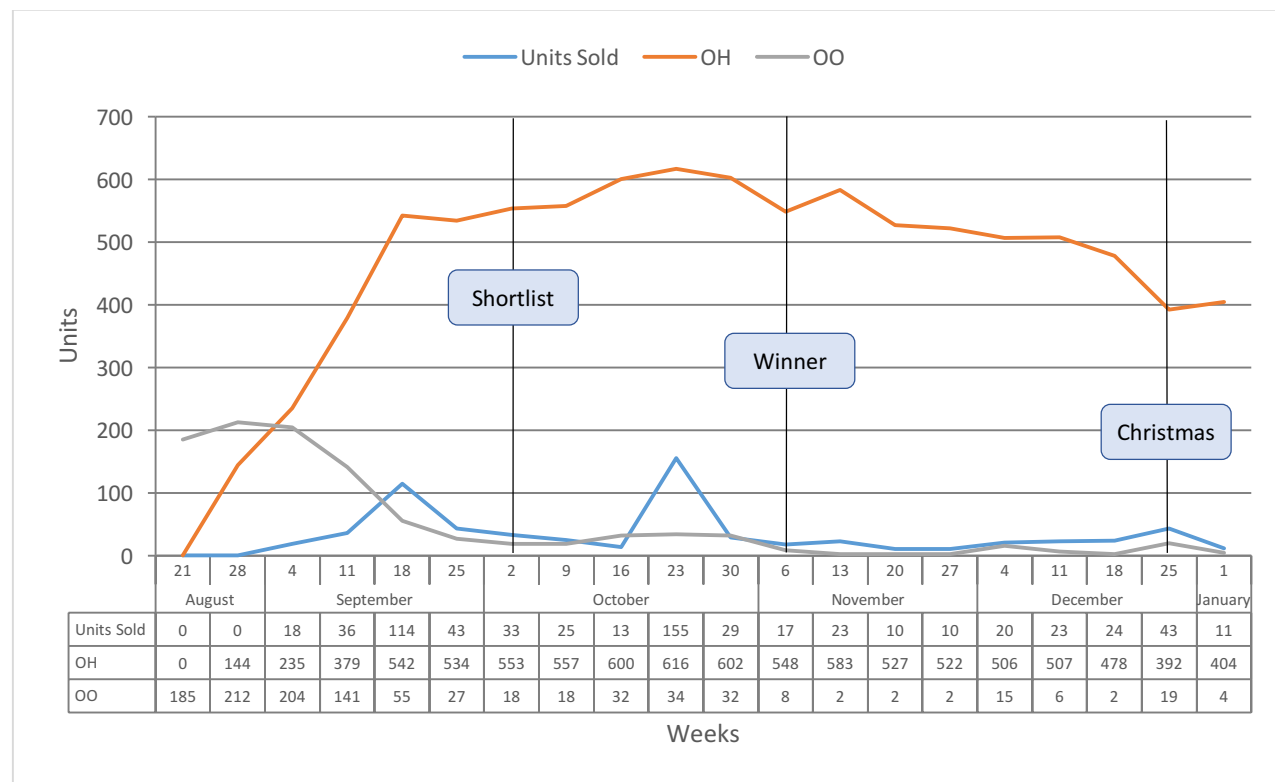
The winning title experienced the greatest sales increase of 157%, but, once again, actual units sold are minimal. *The Parcel*, *Willem De Kooning's Paintbrush*, and *The Break* were shortlisted for the Governor General's Fiction Award on Oct. 4, 2016. The added publicity likely influenced sales into the holiday season, as both *The Parcel* and *Willem de Kooning's Paintbrush* experienced positive sales increases following the winner announcement. Although *The Break* saw a decline of 35% following the winner announcement, it outsold the other four nominated titles substantially, selling a total of 4,699 units during this 20-week period. *The Parcel* experienced the next highest number of sales, with 2,093 units.

Nominee

Michael Helm's *After James*

Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order

McClelland & Stewart
Hardcover Trade
9780771038761
\$34.95



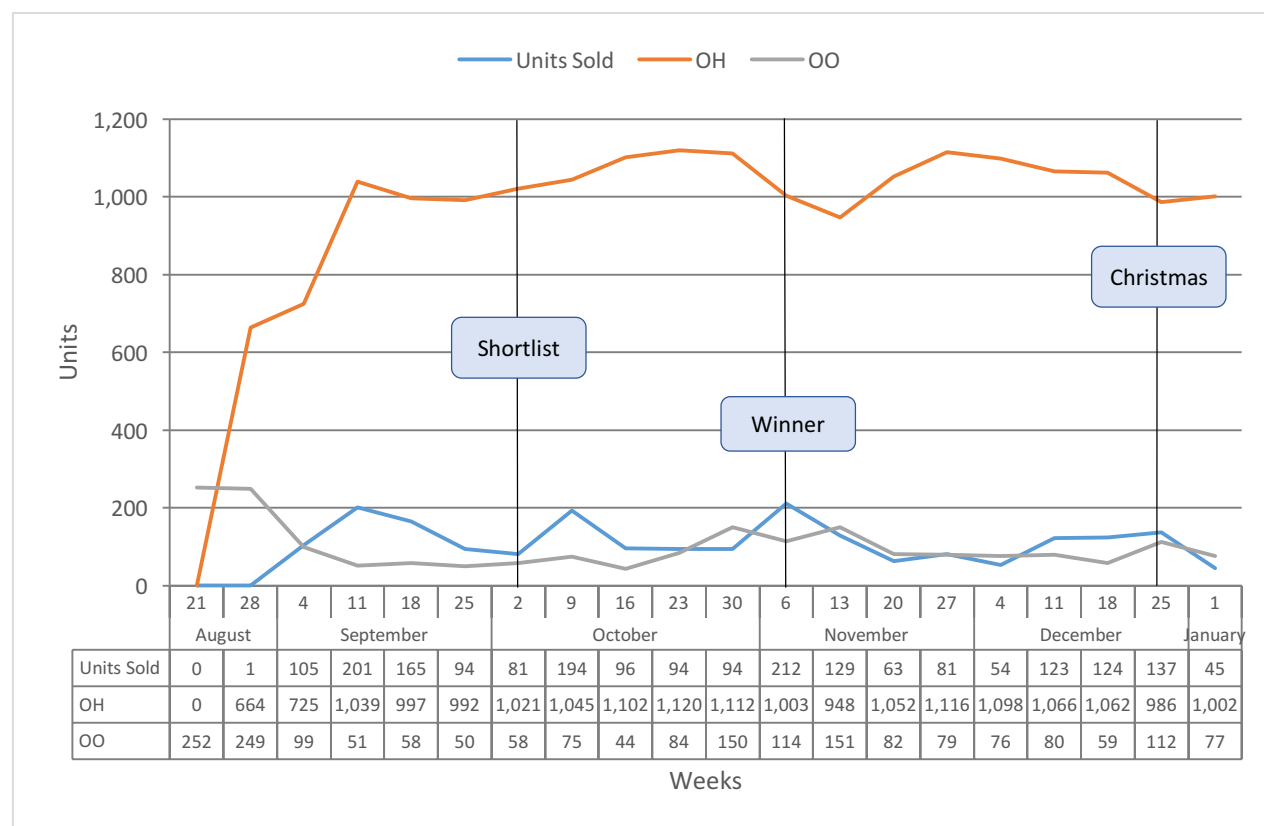
Nominee

Anosh Irani's *The Parcel*

Knopf Canada
Hardcover Trade
9780345816740
\$32.00



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



In addition to being nominated for the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize, *The Parcel* was also nominated for the Governor General's Fiction Award in 2016, and would go on to be shortlisted for the BC Book Prizes' Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize in 2017.

Nominee

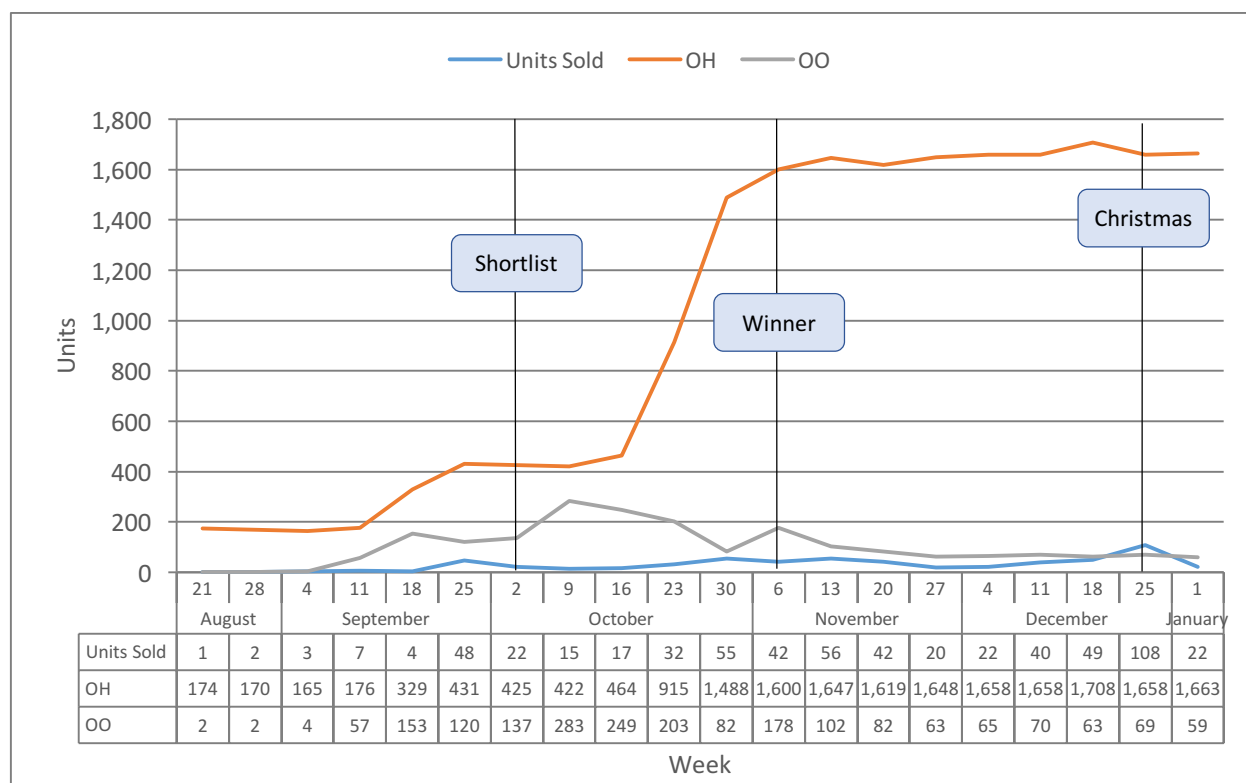
Kerry Lee Powell's *Willem De Kooning's Paintbrush*

HarperCollins
Hardcover Trade
9781443435772
\$26.99
Trade Paperback
9781443453974
\$21.99



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order

- Hardcover and trade paperback units combined

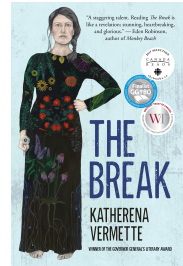


Willem De Kooning's Paintbrush was also shortlisted for the Governor General's Fiction Award in 2016, and longlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize in 2016.

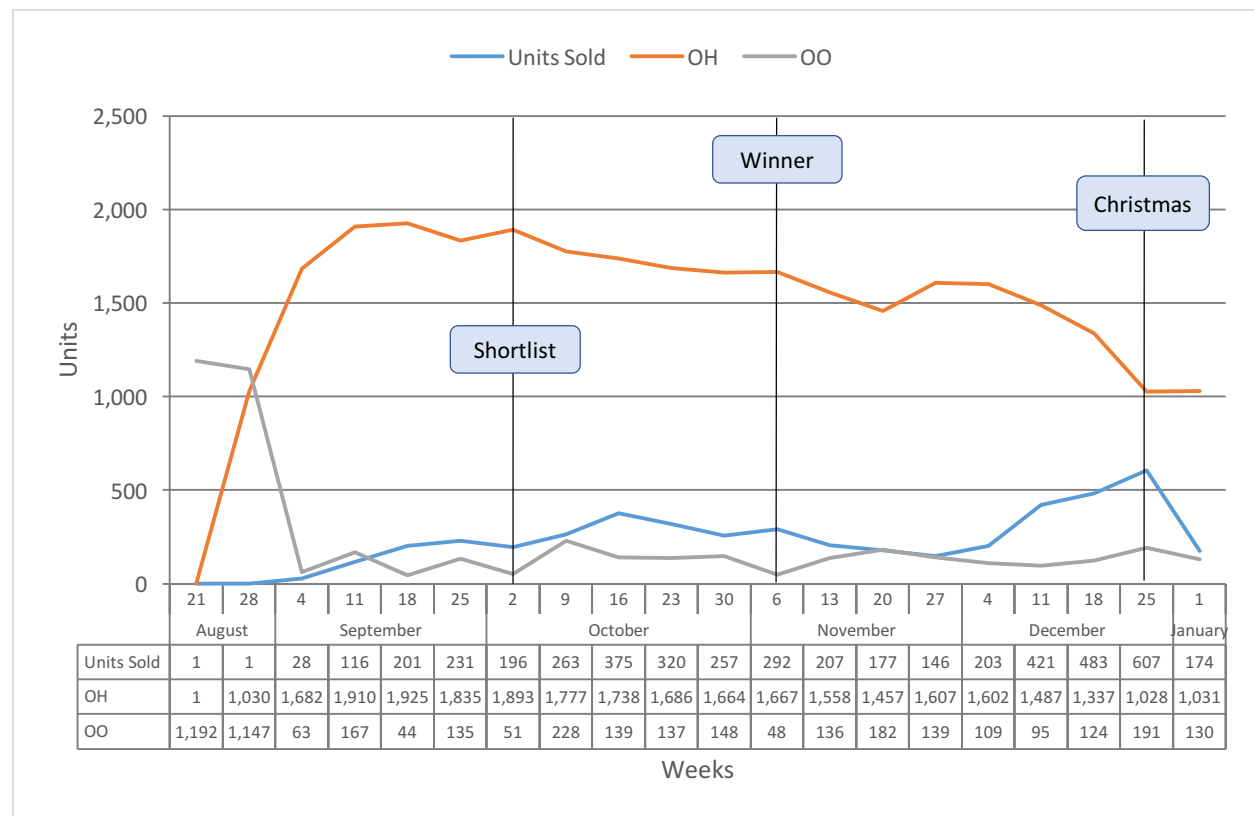
Nominee

Katherena Vermette's *The Break*

House of Anansi Press
Trade Paperback
9781487001117
\$22.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order

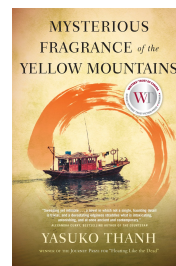


Katherena Vermette's *The Break* was also shortlisted for the Governor General's Fiction Award in 2016. It would go on to win the Amazon.ca First Novel Award, the Margaret Laurence Award for Fiction, and the Carol Shields Winnipeg Book Award, in addition to being chosen as a Canada Reads 2017 finalist.

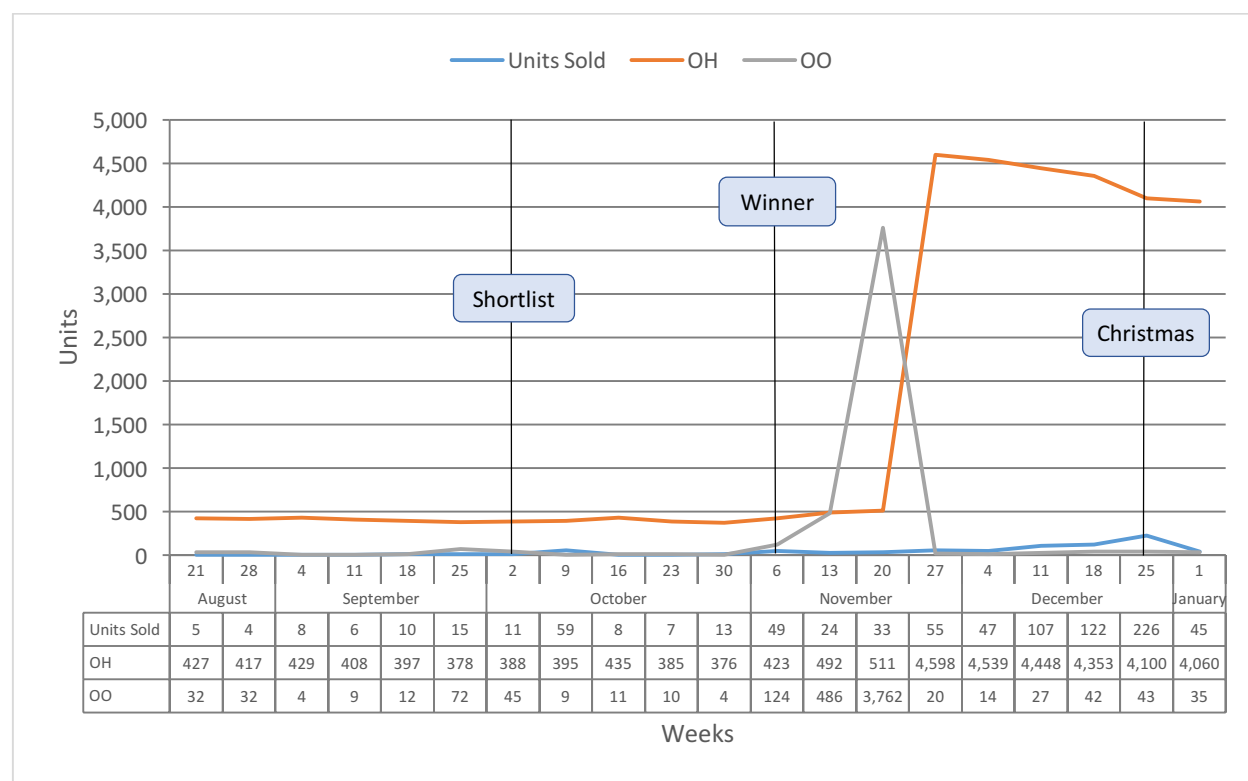
Winner

Yasuko Thanh's *Mysterious Fragrance of the Yellow Mountains*

Penguin Canada
Trade Paperback
9780670068784
\$24.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



In addition to winning the 2016 Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize, *Mysterious Fragrance of the Yellow Mountains* would go on to become a finalist for the 2017 Amazon.ca / Books in Canada First Novel Award.

Year-over-year Comparison 2011–2016

2016

Yasuko Thanh's *Mysterious Fragrance of the Yellow Mountains*
Penguin Canada
Trade Paperback | 9780670068784 | \$24.95

2013

Colin McAdam's *A Beautiful Truth*
Penguin Publishing Group
Hardcover Trade | 9780670066360 | \$30.00

2015

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

2012

Tamas Dobozý's *Siege 13*
Dundurn Press
Trade Paperback | 9781771022040 | \$22.95

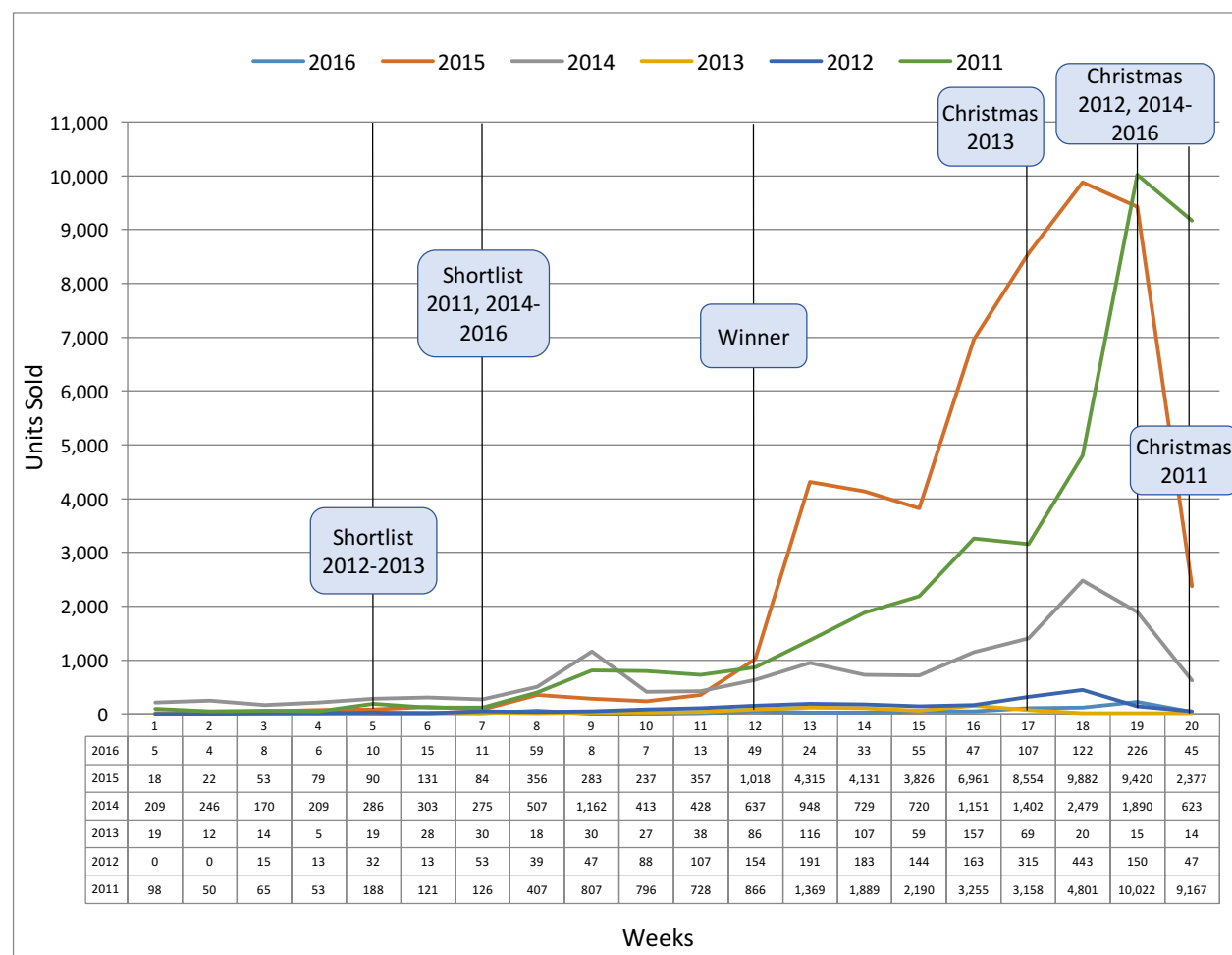
2014

Miriam Toews's *All My Puny Sorrows*
Knopf Canada
Hardcover Trade | 9780345808004 | \$29.95

2011

Patrick deWitt's *The Sisters Brothers*
House of Anansi Press
Trade Hardcover | 9780887842894 | \$29.95
Trade Paperback | 9781770890329 | \$19.95

Winner Comparison – Volume Sold



A Beautiful Truth (2013) and *Siege 13* (2012) were shortlisted for the Governor General's Fiction Award, in addition to winning the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize. *Fifteen Dogs* (2015) and *The Sisters Brothers* (2011) experience the highest sales peaks of the winning titles, likely because both were also nominated for several awards: *Fifteen Dogs* won the 2015 Scotiabank Giller Prize, and was a Finalist for the 2015 Toronto Book Awards. It would also go on to win Canada Reads in 2017, while *The Sisters Brothers* was nominated for the Man Booker Prize, the Scotiabank Giller Prize, and the Governor General's Fiction Award, which it won in 2011.

Overall, book sales are not dramatically affected by the shortlist announcement and it is not until after the titles win that we see the sales notably increase, peaking during the holiday season.

Conclusion

Our analysis leads us to conclude that the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize continues to have a positive impact on Canadian book sales:

- Being shortlisted for the award does not necessarily have a large impact on sales. Historically, the winning titles seem to have slightly higher sales numbers than other shortlisted titles.
- Titles with multiple nominations fare better than those with one. The winning titles with the highest sales are André Alexis's *Fifteen Dogs* and Patrick deWitt's *The Sisters Brothers*. *Fifteen Dogs* won the Scotiabank Giller Prize in addition to the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize, while *The Sisters Brothers* was shortlisted for the Governor General's Fiction Award and the Man Booker Prize the year it won. The added publicity garnered from multiple nominations may also benefit sales for titles that do not win, such as Katherena Vermette's *The Break*, which received multiple nominations and experienced the highest sales out of the five nominated titles in 2016.