



BNC RESEARCH

A RESEARCH REPORT BY BOOKNET CANADA

# BNC RESEARCH

09.2018

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

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



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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 2013 to 2017.

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 2017 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 behaviour, and how it relates to the rise and fall of the Non-Fiction market as a whole.

Next, we look at the 2017 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 2013 to 2017, 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.

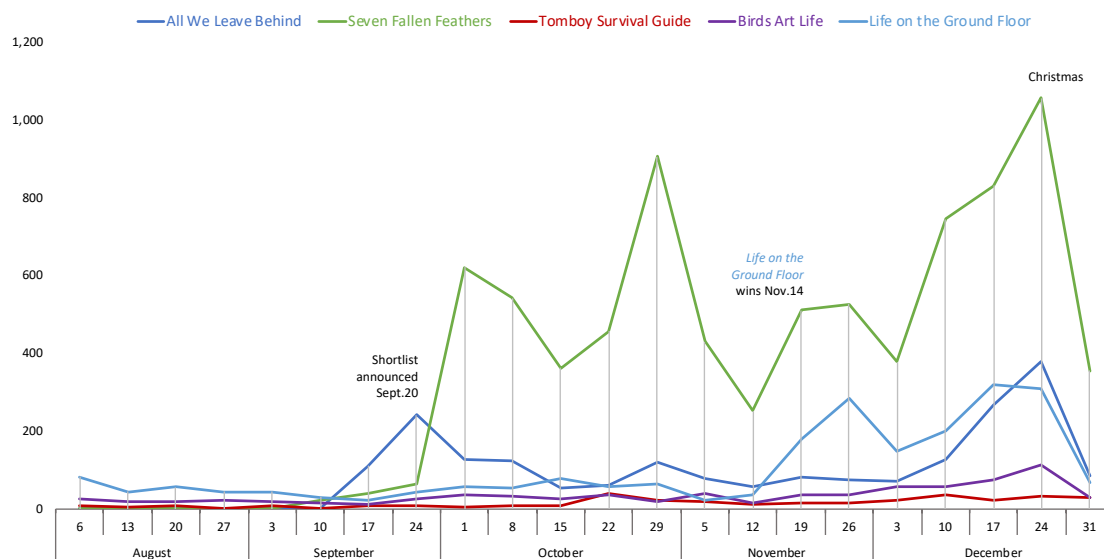
# The Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction 2017

Organized by The Writers' Trust of Canada  
Nominations announced: Sept. 20, 2017  
Winners announced: Nov. 14, 2017  
Winner: *Life on the Ground Floor*

## Volume Sold

■ Shortlist announced   
 ■ Winner announced   
 ■ Christmas

|           |    | <i>All We Leave Behind</i> | <i>Seven Fallen Feathers</i> | <i>Tomboy Survival Guide</i> | <i>Birds Art Life</i> | <i>Life on the Ground Floor</i> | Overall Unit Sales | 2017 Market Non-Fiction | Week number |
|-----------|----|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| August    | 6  | 0                          | 0                            | 6                            | 25                    | 82                              | 113                | 272,539                 | 1           |
|           | 13 | 0                          | 0                            | 5                            | 18                    | 44                              | 67                 | 276,111                 | 2           |
|           | 20 | 0                          | 0                            | 7                            | 18                    | 55                              | 80                 | 288,411                 | 3           |
|           | 27 | 0                          | 0                            | 1                            | 22                    | 44                              | 67                 | 300,472                 | 4           |
| September | 3  | 0                          | 0                            | 7                            | 19                    | 43                              | 69                 | 301,669                 | 5           |
|           | 10 | 1                          | 20                           | 2                            | 16                    | 29                              | 68                 | 298,007                 | 6           |
|           | 17 | 109                        | 38                           | 6                            | 11                    | 20                              | 184                | 321,890                 | 7           |
|           | 24 | 241                        | 63                           | 8                            | 24                    | 41                              | 377                | 312,292                 | 8           |
| October   | 1  | 127                        | 619                          | 5                            | 36                    | 58                              | 845                | 318,864                 | 9           |
|           | 8  | 124                        | 542                          | 9                            | 31                    | 54                              | 760                | 314,956                 | 10          |
|           | 15 | 53                         | 361                          | 6                            | 25                    | 79                              | 524                | 289,018                 | 11          |
|           | 22 | 61                         | 456                          | 40                           | 34                    | 56                              | 647                | 332,742                 | 12          |
| November  | 29 | 121                        | 905                          | 20                           | 17                    | 63                              | 1,126              | 344,680                 | 13          |
|           | 5  | 77                         | 429                          | 19                           | 38                    | 23                              | 586                | 347,744                 | 14          |
|           | 12 | 58                         | 251                          | 10                           | 16                    | 37                              | 372                | 361,787                 | 15          |
|           | 19 | 82                         | 509                          | 15                           | 34                    | 178                             | 818                | 405,056                 | 16          |
| December  | 26 | 73                         | 526                          | 13                           | 34                    | 283                             | 929                | 517,493                 | 17          |
|           | 3  | 71                         | 377                          | 20                           | 57                    | 149                             | 674                | 565,510                 | 18          |
|           | 10 | 125                        | 744                          | 36                           | 55                    | 198                             | 1,158              | 657,629                 | 19          |
|           | 17 | 266                        | 829                          | 20                           | 74                    | 320                             | 1,509              | 801,909                 | 20          |
|           | 24 | 377                        | 1,055                        | 31                           | 114                   | 309                             | 1,886              | 1,024,478               | 21          |
|           | 31 | 85                         | 355                          | 28                           | 30                    | 67                              | 565                | 424,443                 | 22          |



**Shortlist announcement (Sept. 20, 2017):**

Three of the five shortlisted titles experienced a sales increase the week after the shortlist announcement. *Seven Fallen Feathers* experienced the greatest sales increase of 3101% while sales for *Tomboy Survival Guide* remained relatively flat. Unit sales for *All We Leave Behind* peaked the week of the shortlist announcement.

**Winner announcement (Nov. 14, 2017):**

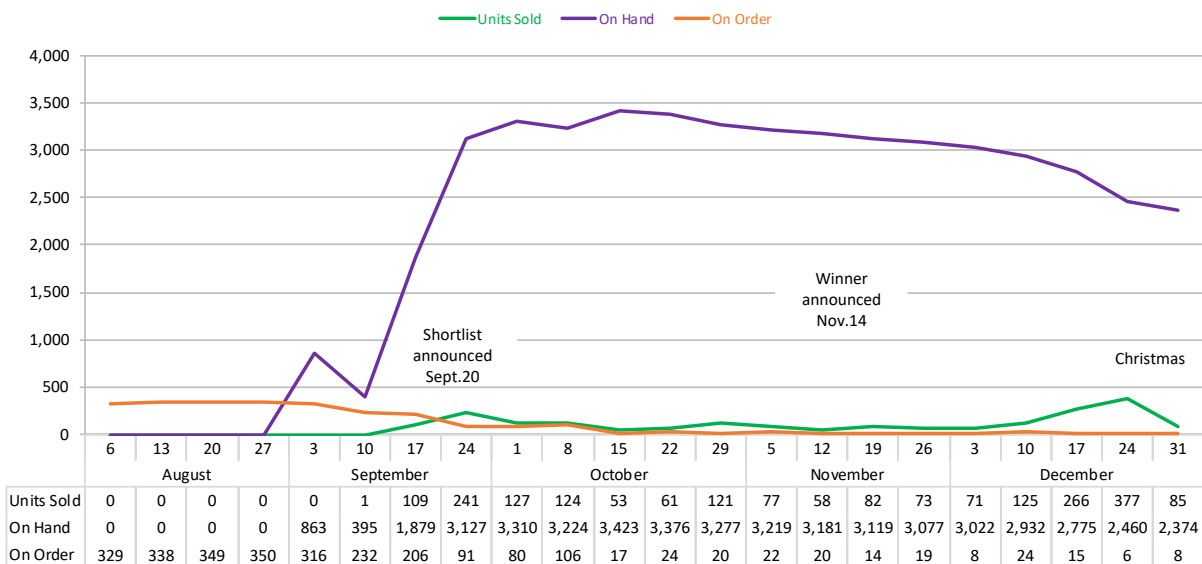
*Seven Fallen Feathers* sold the highest number of units over the 22-week period, with a -0.4% change after the winner announcement and a jump in sales the week of and the week after the winner announcement. *Life on the Ground Floor* experienced a 590% sales increase after winning. All but *Tomboy Survival Guide* peaked the week before Christmas — *Tomboy Survival Guide* peaked in late October, four weeks after the shortlist announcement and three weeks before the winner announcement.

Nominee

# Carol Off's *All We Leave Behind*

*A Reporter's Journey into the Lives of Others*

Random House of Canada  
Hardcover Trade  
9780345816832  
\$32.95

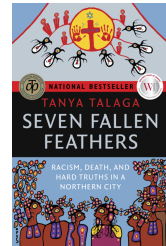


Nominee

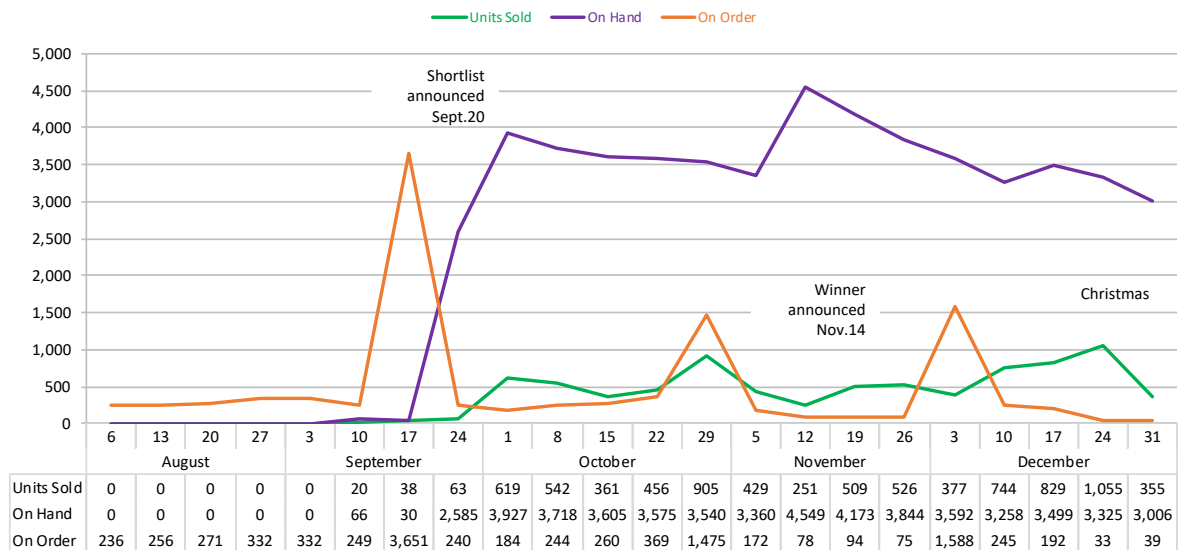
# Tanya Talaga's *Seven Fallen Feathers*

*Racism, Death, and Hard Truths in a Northern City*

House of Anansi Press  
Trade Paperback  
9781487002268  
\$22.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order

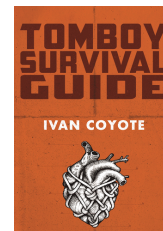


*Seven Fallen Feathers* sold the highest number of units of all the nominated titles by a significant margin. It also went on to win the RBC Taylor Prize on Feb. 26, 2018.

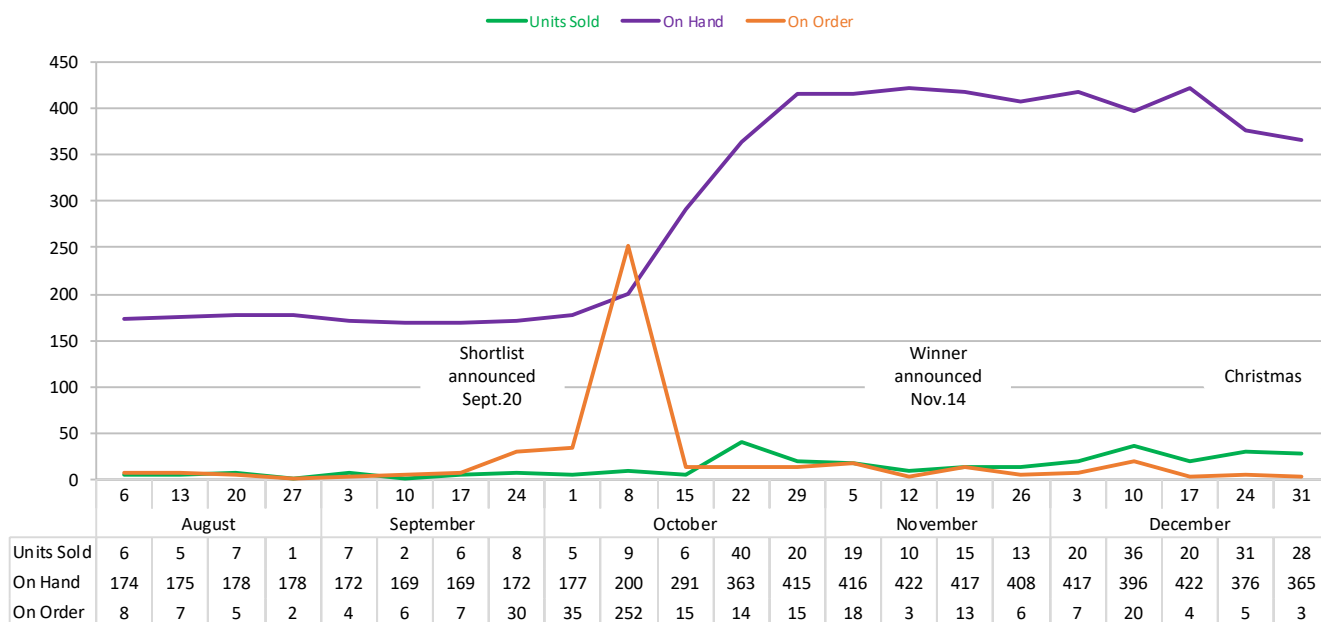
Nominee

# Ivan Coyote's *Tomboy Survival Guide*

Arsenal Pulp Press  
Trade Paperback  
9781551526560  
\$17.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order

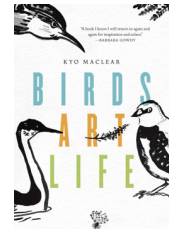


Nominee

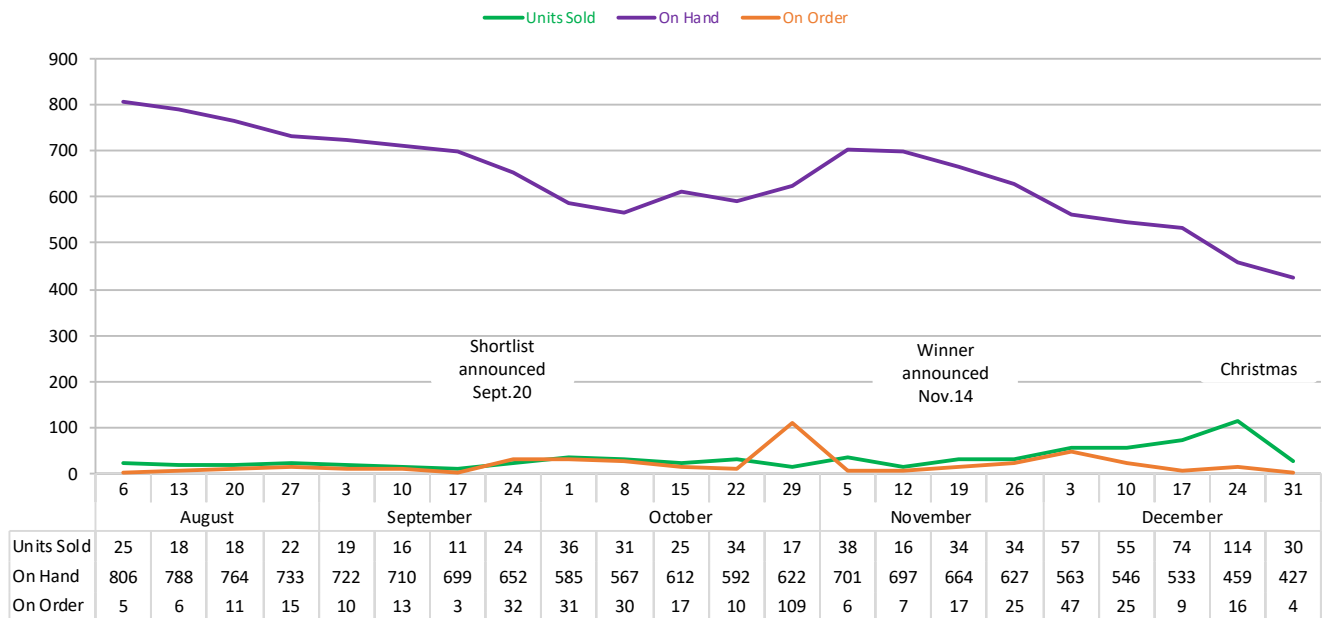
# Kyo Maclear's *Birds Art Life*

*A Year of Observation*

Doubleday Canada  
Hardcover Trade  
9780385687515  
\$29.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order

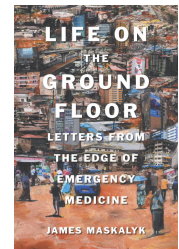


Winner

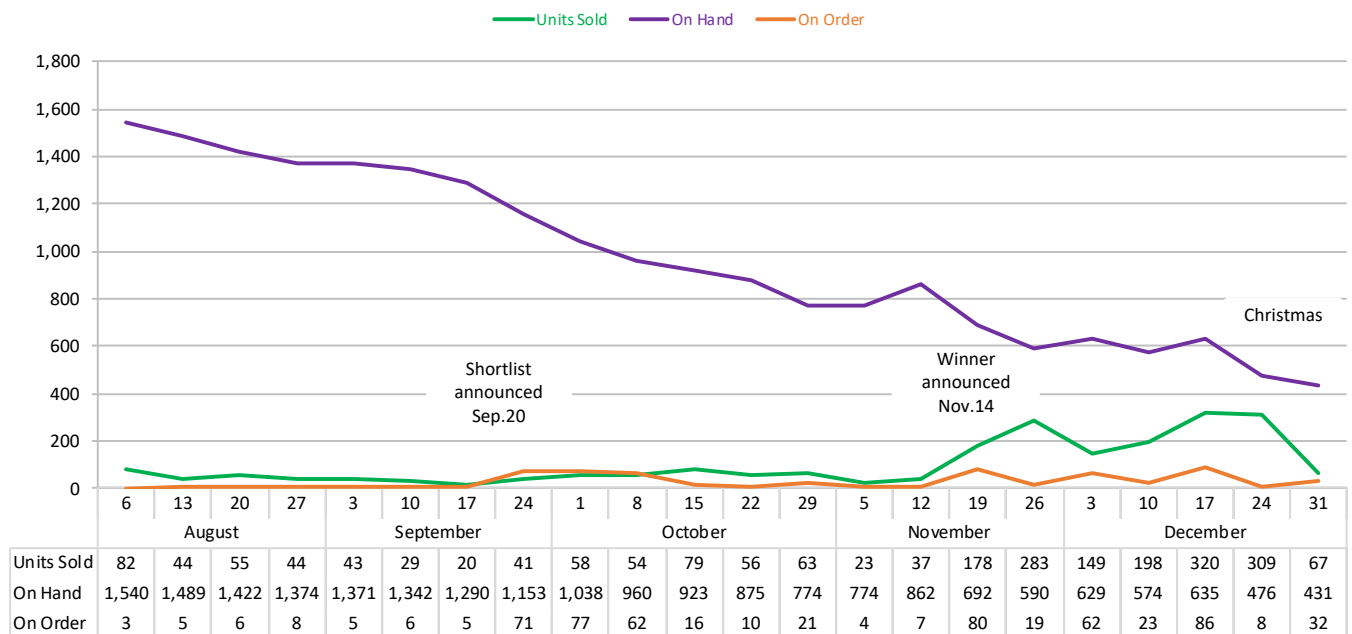
## James Maskalyk's *Life on the Ground Floor*

*Letters from the Edge of Emergency Medicine*

Doubleday Canada  
Hardcover Trade  
9780385665971  
\$29.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



In addition to winning the Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction, *Life on the Ground Floor* would go on to be longlisted for the RBC Taylor Prize on Jan. 10, 2018.

## Year-Over-Year Comparison 2013-2017

2017

James Maskalyk's *Life on the Ground Floor*  
Doubleday Canada  
Hardcover Trade | 9780385665971 | \$29.95

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

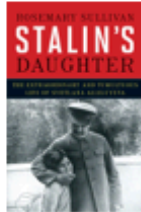
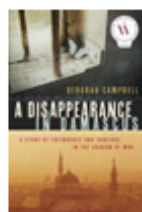
2014

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

2013

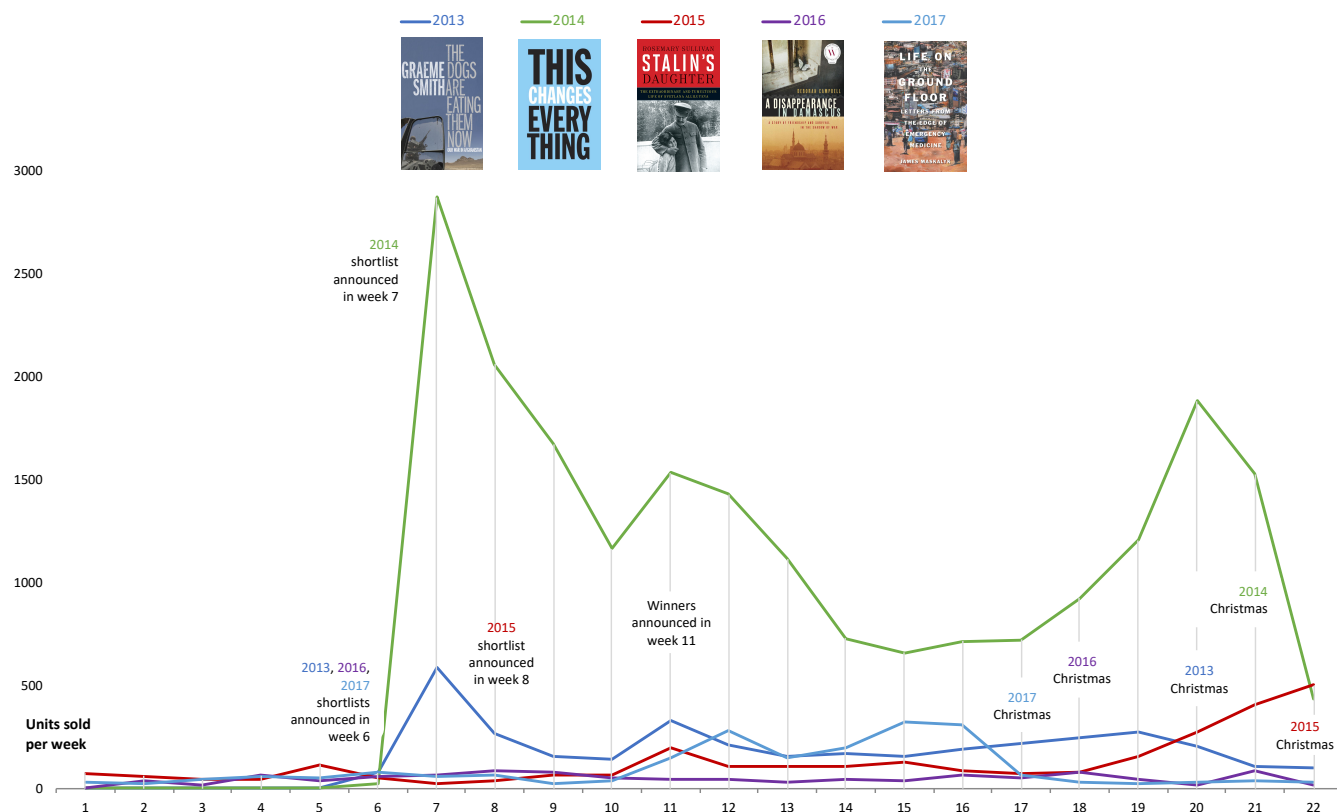
Graeme Smith's *The Dogs Are Eating Them Now*  
Knopf Canada  
Hardcover Trade | 9780307397805 | \$32.00

### Winner Comparison – Volume Sold

|                                                                                    | Shortlist announced                                                                | Winner announced                                                                   | Christmas                                                                           |                                                                                      |      |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| <i>The Dogs Are Eating Them Now</i><br>Graeme Smith                                | <i>This Changes Everything</i><br>Naomi Klein                                      | <i>Stalin's Daughter</i><br>Rosemary Sullivan                                      | <i>Disappearance in Damascus</i><br>Deborah Campbell                                | <i>Life on the Ground Floor</i><br>James Maskalyk                                    |      |
|  |  |  |  |  |      |
| Week                                                                               | 2013                                                                               | 2014                                                                               | 2015                                                                                | 2016                                                                                 | 2017 |
| 1                                                                                  | 0                                                                                  | 0                                                                                  | 74                                                                                  | 0                                                                                    | 29   |
| 2                                                                                  | 0                                                                                  | 0                                                                                  | 60                                                                                  | 39                                                                                   | 20   |
| 3                                                                                  | 0                                                                                  | 0                                                                                  | 42                                                                                  | 18                                                                                   | 41   |
| 4                                                                                  | 0                                                                                  | 1                                                                                  | 45                                                                                  | 64                                                                                   | 58   |
| 5                                                                                  | 0                                                                                  | 0                                                                                  | 117                                                                                 | 36                                                                                   | 54   |
| 6                                                                                  | 78                                                                                 | 20                                                                                 | 54                                                                                  | 55                                                                                   | 79   |
| 7                                                                                  | 587                                                                                | 2,868                                                                              | 26                                                                                  | 63                                                                                   | 56   |
| 8                                                                                  | 265                                                                                | 2,060                                                                              | 35                                                                                  | 86                                                                                   | 63   |
| 9                                                                                  | 153                                                                                | 1,672                                                                              | 62                                                                                  | 76                                                                                   | 23   |
| 10                                                                                 | 143                                                                                | 1,163                                                                              | 67                                                                                  | 49                                                                                   | 37   |
| 11                                                                                 | 328                                                                                | 1,531                                                                              | 200                                                                                 | 47                                                                                   | 148  |
| 12                                                                                 | 213                                                                                | 1,428                                                                              | 109                                                                                 | 43                                                                                   | 283  |
| 13                                                                                 | 159                                                                                | 1,115                                                                              | 107                                                                                 | 29                                                                                   | 149  |
| 14                                                                                 | 171                                                                                | 729                                                                                | 106                                                                                 | 44                                                                                   | 198  |
| 15                                                                                 | 157                                                                                | 659                                                                                | 126                                                                                 | 40                                                                                   | 320  |
| 16                                                                                 | 192                                                                                | 716                                                                                | 83                                                                                  | 62                                                                                   | 309  |
| 17                                                                                 | 219                                                                                | 720                                                                                | 73                                                                                  | 51                                                                                   | 67   |
| 18                                                                                 | 243                                                                                | 924                                                                                | 79                                                                                  | 82                                                                                   | 31   |
| 19                                                                                 | 272                                                                                | 1,207                                                                              | 155                                                                                 | 47                                                                                   | 24   |
| 20                                                                                 | 206                                                                                | 1,879                                                                              | 276                                                                                 | 18                                                                                   | 27   |
| 21                                                                                 | 104                                                                                | 1,526                                                                              | 409                                                                                 | 87                                                                                   | 37   |
| 22                                                                                 | 98                                                                                 | 435                                                                                | 503                                                                                 | 15                                                                                   | 28   |



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The winning titles in 2013, 2015, and 2017 all experienced a sales increase following the winner announcement. As four 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 week of sales for those titles. Naomi Klein’s *This Changes Everything*, the 2014 winner, sold significantly more units than the winners from every other year, followed by Graeme Smith’s *The Dogs Are Eating Them Now*, the 2013 winner.

## 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:

- Three of the five nominated titles in 2017 saw an increase in sales immediately following the shortlist announcement.
- Sales for the nominated titles mostly peaked around Christmas or the announcement weeks.
- There is no discernible 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 or remain relatively flat.