



BNC RESEARCH

A RESEARCH REPORT BY BOOKNET CANADA

BNC RESEARCH

09.2019

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 2018 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 2014 to 2018.

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 2018 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 behaviour, and how it relates to the rise and fall of the Fiction market as a whole.

Next, we look at the 2018 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 2014 to 2018, 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 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 2018

Organized by The Writers' Trust of Canada

Nominations announced: Sept. 26, 2018

Winners announced: Nov. 7, 2018

Winner: *Dear Evelyn*

Volume Sold

		Shortlist announced		Winner announced		Christmas			
									
									
		<i>The Saturday Night Ghost Club</i>	<i>Washington Black</i>	<i>Beirut Hellfire Society</i>	<i>Land Mammals and Sea Creatures</i>	<i>Dear Evelyn</i>	Overall Unit Sales	2018-2019 Market Fiction	Week
September	9	203	809	102	5	15	1,134	263,160	1
	16	203	688	135	6	40	1,072	262,774	2
	23	136	1,437	102	6	50	1,731	256,464	3
	30	127	1,340	122	19	67	1,675	256,642	4
October	7	182	1,406	108	20	36	1,752	261,862	5
	14	86	1,118	85	7	34	1,330	229,475	6
	21	94	1,418	129	11	28	1,680	260,872	7
	28	104	1,272	203	9	62	1,650	253,865	8
November	4	127	1,018	131	8	27	1,311	271,367	9
	11	117	988	151	13	230	1,499	271,625	10
	18	128	980	131	9	145	1,393	264,138	11
	25	94	6,264	57	11	128	6,554	354,744	12
December	2	119	4,915	81	46	134	5,295	365,540	13
	9	126	6,757	125	26	431	7,465	381,520	14
	16	200	7,618	248	17	671	8,754	432,600	15
	23	225	8,035	247	21	589	9,117	558,278	16
January	30	197	3,646	125	15	214	4,197	301,375	17
	6	65	2,081	54	5	86	2,291	220,985	18
	13	35	1,366	20	4	112	1,537	218,096	19
	20	23	1,141	26	6	113	1,309	202,067	20

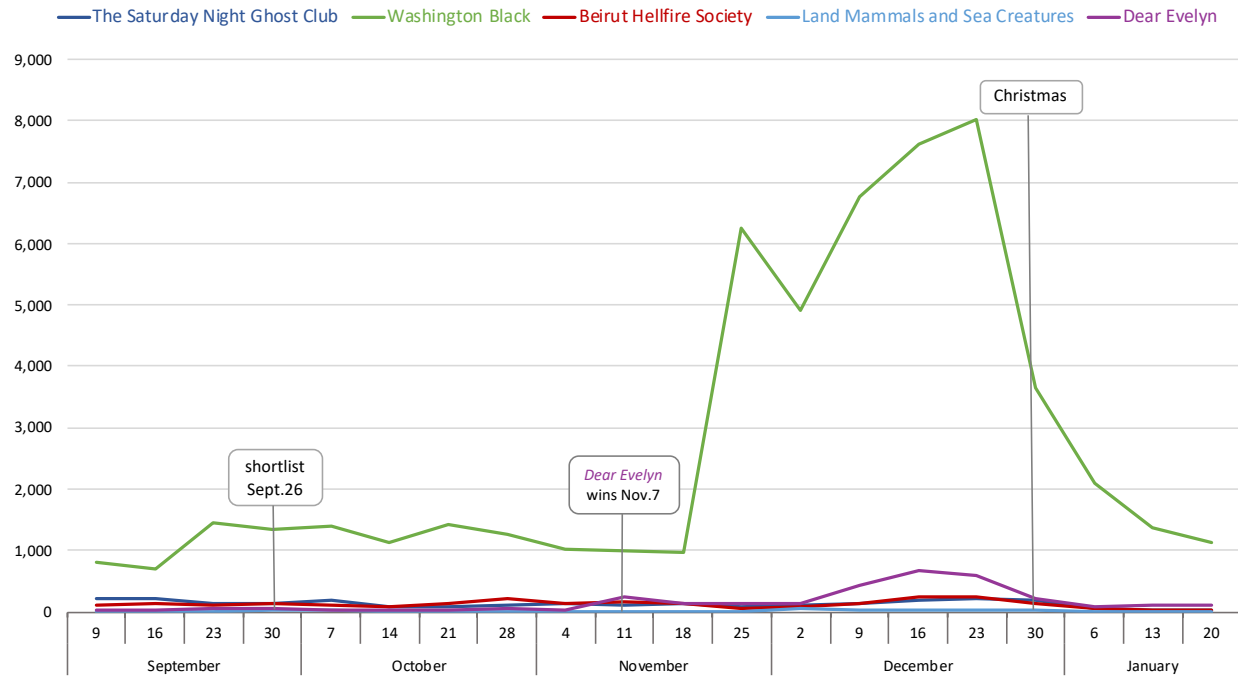
Shortlist announcement (Sept. 26, 2018):

Most of the titles experienced a sales increase the week following the shortlist announcement. Comparing an average of the three weeks prior to the announcement to the week following, we find the percent change ranged from a slight decrease of -4% to the highest increase of 253%. *Dear Evelyn* experienced a sales increase of 3%.

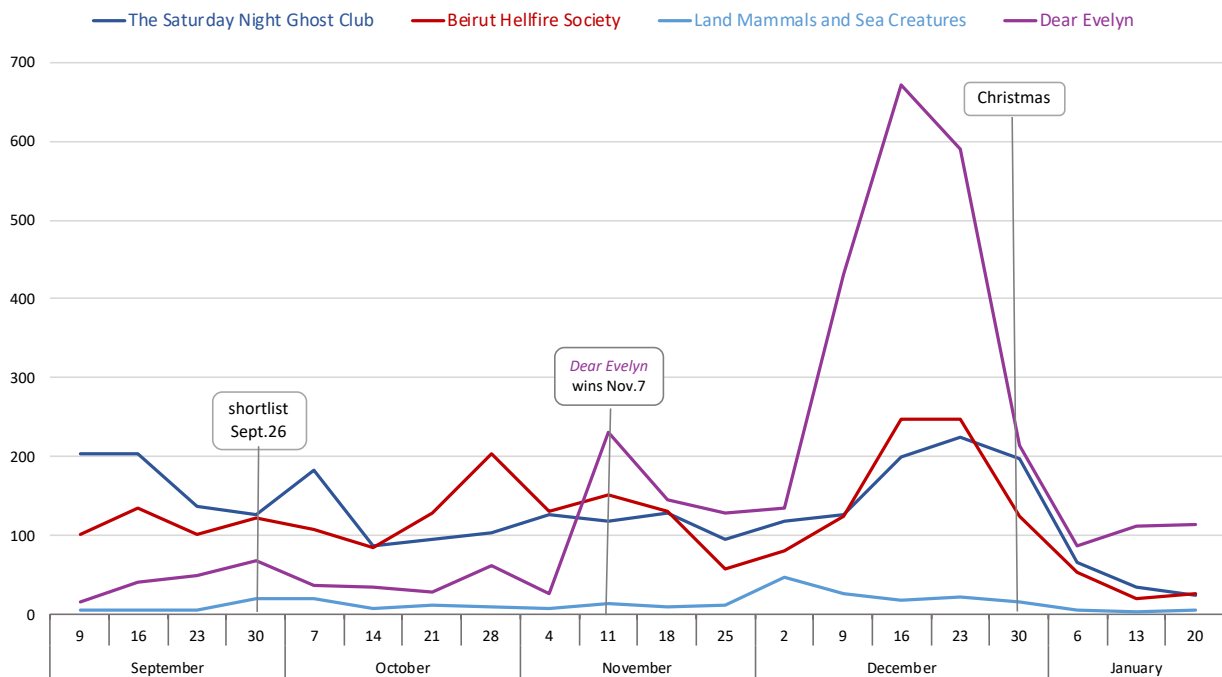
Winner announcement (Nov. 7, 2018):

The winning title, *Dear Evelyn*, experienced a sales increase of 272% in the week following the winner announcement with sales continuing to increase up until Christmas. *The Saturday Night Ghost Club* experienced a sales increase of 18% while the other three nominated titles experienced a sales decrease, ranging from -4% to -21%. *Washington Black*, which had previously been seeing considerable sales, experienced a sales decrease of -21% after the winner announcement. *Washington Black*, winner of the Scotiabank Giller Prize, sold the highest number of books within the graphed time frame (over 54,000 units). Other nominated titles hovered around 2,500-3,000 units, except for *Land Mammals and Sea Creatures* (264).

Volume Sold (including *Washington Black*)



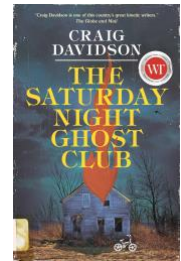
Volume Sold (excluding *Washington Black*)



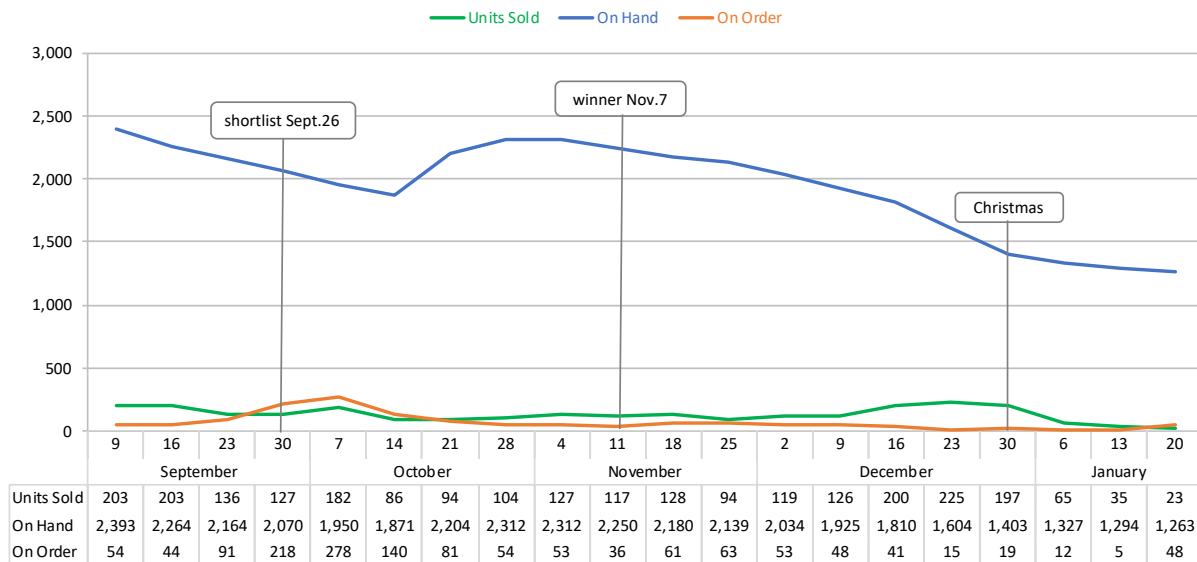
Nominee

Craig Davidson's *The Saturday Night Ghost Club* *A Novel*

Knopf Canada
Hardcover Trade
9780735274822
\$27.00



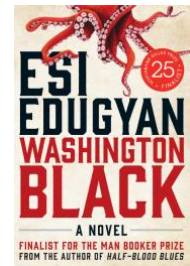
Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



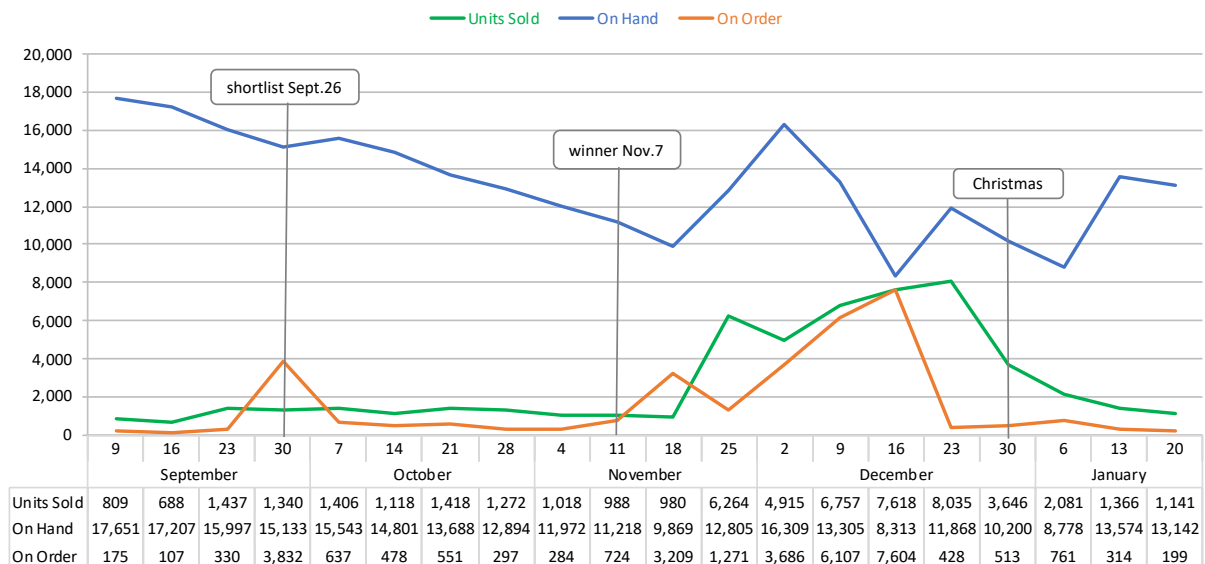
Nominee

Esi Edugyan's *Washington Black* A Novel

HarperCollins Canada
Hardcover Trade
9781443423380
\$33.99



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



Washington Black was also nominated for the Scotiabank Giller Prize on Oct. 1, 2018 and won on Nov. 19, 2019.

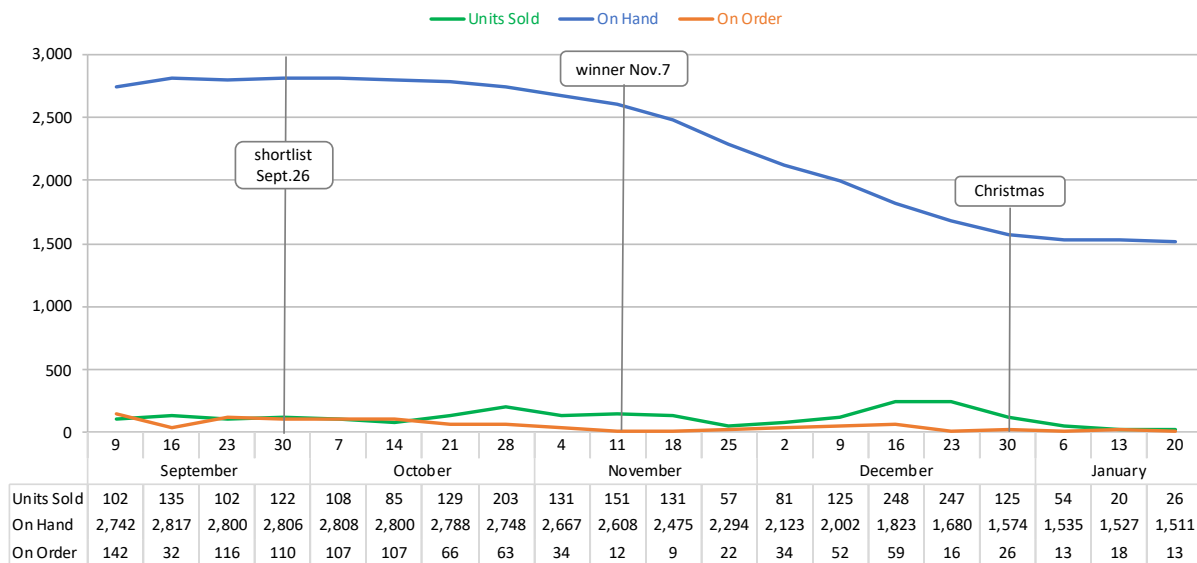
Nominee

Rawi Hage's *Beirut Hellfire Society*

Knopf Canada
Hardcover Trade
9780735273597
\$29.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



Beirut Hellfire Society was also nominated for the Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction on Oct. 3, 2018.

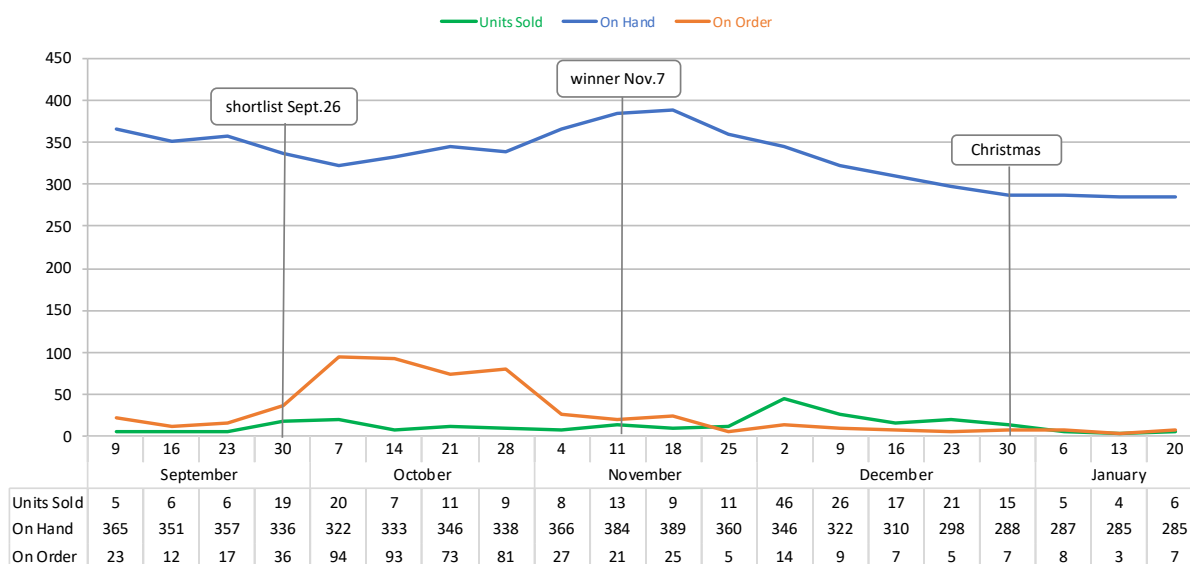
Nominee

Jen Neale's
Land Mammals and Sea Creatures
A Novel

ECW Press
Trade Paperback
9781770414143
\$16.95



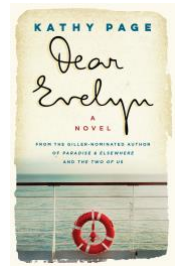
Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



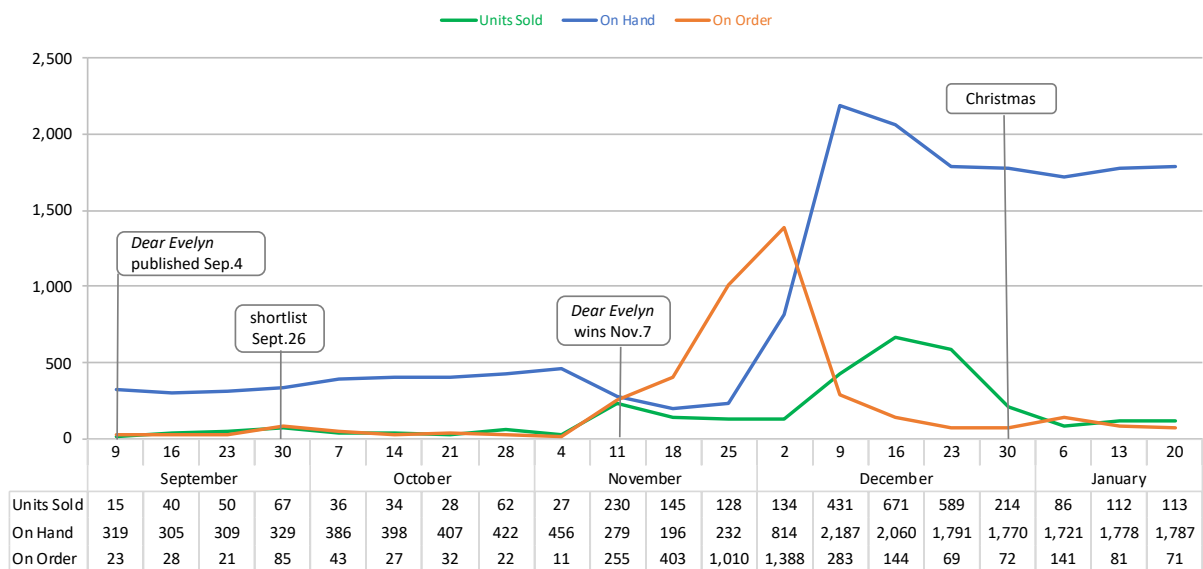
Winner

Kathy Page's *Dear Evelyn*

Biblioasis
Trade Paperback
9781771962094
\$19.95



Sales vs. On Hand vs. On Order



Year-Over-Year Comparison 2014-2018

2018

Kathy Page's *Dear Evelyn*

Biblioasis

Trade Paperback | 9781771962094 | \$19.95

2017

David Chariandy's *Brother*

McClelland & Stewart

Hardcover Trade | 9780771022906 | \$25.00

2016

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

Penguin Canada

Trade Paperback | 9780670068784 | \$24.95

2015

André Alexis's *Fifteen Dogs*

Coach House Books

Trade Paperback | 9781552453056 | \$19.95

2014

Miriam Toews's *All My Puny Sorrows*

Knopf Canada

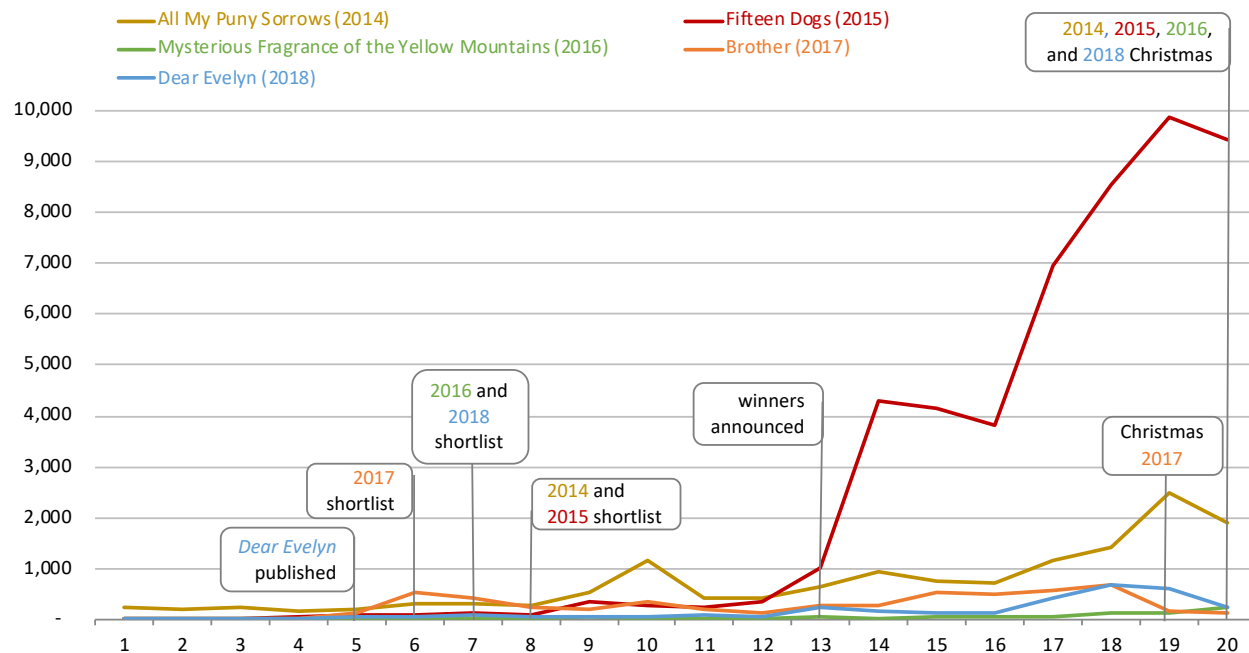
Hardcover Trade | 9780345808004 | \$29.95

Winner Comparison – Volume Sold



	Mysterious Fragrance of the Yellow Mountains				
	<i>All My Puny Sorrows</i> (2014)	<i>Fifteen Dogs</i> (2015)	<i>Mountains</i> (2016)	<i>Brother</i> (2017)	<i>Dear Evelyn</i> (2018)
Week					
1	225	20	11	0	0
2	209	18	5	0	1
3	246	22	4	0	7
4	170	53	8	0	15
5	209	79	6	128	40
6	286	90	10	533	50
7	303	131	15	411	67
8	275	84	11	222	36
9	507	356	59	184	34
10	1,162	283	8	332	28
11	413	237	7	193	62
12	428	357	13	116	27
13	637	1,018	49	255	230
14	948	4,315	24	258	145
15	729	4,131	33	507	128
16	720	3,826	55	489	134
17	1,151	6,961	47	572	431
18	1,402	8,554	107	667	671
19	2,479	9,882	122	170	589
20	1,890	9,420	226	112	214

Winner Comparison – Volume Sold



Fifteen Dogs (2015) experienced the highest sales peaks of the winning titles. It also won or was nominated for several other awards, including: the 2015 Scotiabank Giller Prize (winner); the 2015 Toronto Book Awards (finalist); and Canada Reads 2017 (winner).

Brother experienced the largest sales increase of 863% the week of the shortlist announcement. *Dear Evelyn* experienced the second highest sales peak after the winner announcement. All winning titles experienced a sales increase the week of the winner announcement. Most titles peaked in the week before or of Christmas.