

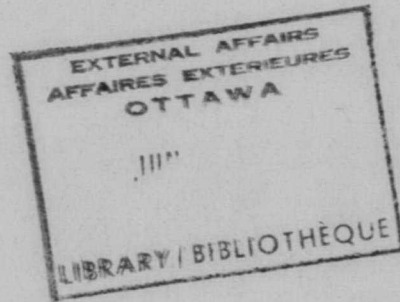


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CANADA/BELGIUM LITERARY PRIZE
AWARDED TO MARIE-CLAIRE BLAIS

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES EXTÉRIEURES

The Department of External Affairs announced the winner of the Canada/Belgium Literary Prize, as mentioned in a press conference given by the Belgian Prime Minister, Monsieur Léo Tindemans, today. The recipient for 1976 is Québec novelist Marie-Claire Blais. The \$2,000 prize will be presented to Ms. Blais at a reception to be held in her honour in Brussels in early May.

The Literary Prize is given annually to French-language writers with the award going in alternate years to authors in Canada and in Belgium. It is given on the basis on an author's total literary work rather than for one particular publication. Co-sponsored by the Governments of Canada and Belgium, the Canadian portion of the prize is financed by the Cultural Affairs Division of the Department of External Affairs, and administered by the Canada Council.

The Belgian poet Géo Norge received the first award when the Literary Prize was inaugurated in 1971, the Canadian poet Gaston Miron was the recipient in 1972, the Belgian writer Suzanne Lilar was the laureat for 1973, Canadian novelist Réjean Ducharme received the 1974 prize, and last year Pierre Mertens of Belgium was honoured.

Born in Québec in 1939, Marie-Claire Blais is best known for her novels, although she is popular also as a playwright and a poet. Her first work, La Belle bête (1959) was written when she was 19 years old. Then followed: Tête blanche (1961); Le jour est noir (1962); Une saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel (1965), awarded the Prix Médicis, and the Canada/France Literary Prize; L'insoumise (1966); David Sterne (1967); Les manuscrits de Pauline Archange (1968), Governor General's Award; Les voyageurs sacrés (1968); L'exécution (play 1968); Vivre! Vivre! (1969); Les apparences (1970); Le loup (1972); Un joualonnais, sa joualonie (1974); Fièvres (1974, a collection of radio plays); Un liaison parisienne (1975). Her most recent work appears in an anthology of women writers, La nef des sorcières (1976).

Une saison dans la vie d'Emmanuel and Les manuscrits de Pauline Archange have been translated in English, the former work was also issued in Italian.

A Guggenheim scholarship allowed Ms. Blais to live in Cape Cod from 1963 to 1971; since then she has lived in France, although she makes frequent visits to Québec.

The winners of the Canada/Belgium prize are chosen by a jury composed of members appointed by the Belgian Ministry of French Culture and by the Canada Council. This year the Canadian jury members were Madame Louise Maheu-Forcier, and Messieurs Jacques Godbout, Gilles Marcotte, Jean-Guy Pilon and Naim Kattan. The Belgian representatives were Madame E. De Keyser and Messieurs Jean Réniche, Pierre Mertens, Charles Bertin, Léo Moulin and Jean Tordeur.

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