

# Malahat *lite*

## Virtual Newsletter of *The Malahat Review*

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CONTEST EDITION

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### 1. 2012 Novella Prize

#### Deadline:

**February 1, 2012**

**Prize:** \$1500 CAD

#### Entry fee:

\$35 CAD for Canadians

\$40 USD for US entries

\$45 USD for entries from elsewhere

(entry fee includes a 1-year subscription)

Submit a single work of fiction in any genre or on any subject of between 10,000 and 20,000 words in length.

This year's judges are:



**Valerie Compton:** What do I want in a novella? I want to be engaged with the narrative. Surprise me with language, metaphor, meaning, shape, passion. Surprise yourself.

**Gabriella Goliger:** A novella does what neither a novel nor a short story can do: it tells a largish story within a short space. And it does so by satisfying the reader that the form chosen for the content was exactly right. A novella shouldn't be a novel on a diet, or a short story gone obese.



**Terence Young:** If I were a runner, I'd say that a good novella keeps up the intense pace of a short story for a longer time much the way milers these days run as though they're competing in the 440, flat out. I think of Jim Harrison, of Annabel Lyon—writers who don't want to compromise the power of their tale by watering it down, stretching it out.

## 2. Like Showing a Stranger your Self-inflicted Bruises: Tony Tulathimutte on life after winning our 2010 Novella Prize

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*In the spring of 2010, Tony Tulathimutte won our 2010 Novella Prize with his novella, "Brains" (published in issue #171, Summer 2010). His novella was chosen from 196 submissions, and was described by our judges as "not only a compelling, unpredictable story, gripping from beginning to end, but one in which the writer brings authority and authenticity to his use of medical jargon while sending up the protagonist's sense of her own superiority. The story's tongue-in-cheek, satiric wit was a welcome change. Above all, the characters are utterly original and stay with the reader after the story ends." Malahat volunteer Heike Lettrari caught up with Tony recently to question him on life post-win, and his thoughts on the novella.*



**Heike Lettrari:** Where are you now? You recently entered the Iowa Writers' Workshop—how is that experience impacting your writing? On your website, you state that you're working on a novel. Is that still the case?

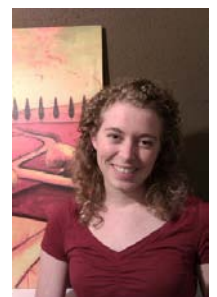
**Tony Tulathimutte:** I'm in my second year at the Workshop, living in a second-floor apartment that several of my friends say smells like gas (I can't smell it). Iowa City is a good place to write, a walkable-drinkable town with weather patterns violent enough keep you indoors and working. I've been focusing single-mindedly on my novel since 2008, after finishing "Brains," an experience that got me comfortable with the idea of writing at somewhat narcissistic lengths about autobiographical material. Right now my novel seems to be running long, but with my deflationary tendencies, I might end up with another novella, who knows.

**HL:** What did winning *The Malahat Review's* 2010 Novella Prize mean to you? Did it change your perception of your own work? And what do you think is the value of a writing contest such as the Novella Prize, which in part seeks to revive and revitalize the quiet form of the novella, as well as promote/reward the writers composing the best of these stories?

**TT:** The dormancy of the novella form led me to assume that "Brains" wouldn't see any kind of print, which is fine, since publication should always be an afterthought to the writing itself. Learning that the *Malahat Review* contest existed was a great surprise, and it struck me as both very generous that a magazine would champion an obscure form, and also very shrewd—after all, there are lots of good novellas looking for publication, and the few places that offer those opportunities are apt to receive a gold-rush of ambitious submissions. You can probably guess how lucky I felt when I learned that I'd won. It's encouraging and flattering whenever you can convince yourself that other people actually want to read your work, which otherwise feels sort of like showing a stranger your self-inflicted bruises.

Read the rest of this interview at [www.malahatreview.ca](http://www.malahatreview.ca)

The deadline for our 2012 Novella Prize is **February 1, 2012**. Will you be the next Tony Tulathimutte?



### 3. 2011 Constance Rooke Creative Nonfiction Prize Winner: Anne Marie Todkill

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Congratulations to **Anne Marie Todkill** of Ottawa, whose memoir “**Hoarding**” was chosen from 137 entries to win the \$1000 2011 Constance Rooke Creative Nonfiction Prize.

Judge **Terry Glavin** commented that the story “is profoundly intimate and heart-rending [and] cuts to the quick without any attempt to inflict pain, disclosing a family tragedy without any resort to melancholy or even the slightest trace of narcissism or self-pity. There is not a single dodge or shortcut in it. There is no elaborately reconstructed dialogue, there are no sleights of hand or flights of whimsy, and not a single concession to the faddish. There is only the plain and everyday language of the author, and from her perfectly ordinary lexicon, the wholly unglamorous people and even the tiniest objects within her field of vision are allowed to tell their own unembellished and extraordinary stories. ‘Hoarding’ is the kind of story that redeems the ‘problematized’ genre of creative nonfiction, besides, and returns the vocation to its greatest virtues and value. It’s a true story about real life, a short story not one jot less glorious than a grand work of fiction. We need more of this.”

#### **Turning Out One’s Pockets: Carolina Skibinski in Conversation with Anne Marie Todkill**



**Carolina Skibinski:** Terry Glavin, the judge for this year’s non-fiction competition, described the language in your winning piece as “plain and everyday,” and from this, “the wholly unglamorous people and even the tiniest of objects are allowed to tell their embellished and extraordinary stories.” It is interesting to me that in using a crisp and

lucid style you seem to reveal an inextricable relationship between that which is hidden and uncovered; for instance you remark, “To recover a history, one must first bury it.” I would like to know your thoughts on the language you used and whether you intended it to relate to the secrets and hiding places, and uncovering and untangling, in your piece.

**Anne Marie Todkill:** You might think this is odd, but I was surprised by Terry Glavin’s description—which I am deeply grateful for, by the way—of my “perfectly ordinary lexicon.” In other contexts, I would say, a plain vocabulary has not been my trademark. But then I realized that perhaps I’d succeeded in doing something I’ve been trying to do for some time. I think I suffered from an overexposure to Virginia Woolf at an impressionable age, not to mention my gluttonous consumption of Victorian novels over a period of time, and so the plain phrase was not what I’d been schooled in, so to speak. That being said, I don’t think I was making the sophisticated calculation that you suggest when I pitched the language of this piece the way I did. I just wanted to be blunt. And I wanted to be precise. I worried that those “tiny objects” would be of no interest to the reader. So I did what I do as an editor, which is to strip the sentences down. Most writing improves—at least to the contemporary ear—when you take words out.

Read the rest of this interview at [www.malahatreview.ca](http://www.malahatreview.ca)

You can read Anne Marie Todkill’s memoir, “Hoarding” in our Winter 2011 issue (#177), due out in early February, 2012.

