



# PEN/FAULKNER

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## **Alistair MacLeod and Amy Hempel to receive 2009 PEN/Malamud Award for Excellence in the Short Story**

Washington, D.C.—**Alistair MacLeod** and **Amy Hempel** have been selected to receive the twenty-second annual **PEN/Malamud Award**. Given annually since 1988 in honor of the late Bernard Malamud, this award recognizes a body of work which demonstrates excellence in the art of short fiction. The announcement was made today by the directors of the PEN/Faulkner Foundation, Robert Stone and Susan Richards Shreve, Co-Chairs.

The author of the internationally acclaimed short story collections, *The Lost Salt Gift of Blood*, *As Birds BringForth the Sun*, and *Island: The Complete Stories*, as well as a celebrated novel, *No Great Mischief*, **Alistair MacLeod** was raised in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia and was educated at St. Francis Xavier University, the University of New Brunswick, and University of Notre Dame. He edited *The University of Windsor Review* and was a long-time teacher and mentor to generations of aspiring writers. Praised by Margaret Atwood and Colm Tóibín, among others, MacLeod's stories delineate the landscapes of Cape Breton, and the historic and geographic ties, particularly of the Highland Scots people, to this region. "Many short stories are local in their settings and concerns," MacLeod has written, "but the best of them are universal in that they reach out to a readership beyond the local boundaries of time and place." In addition to the PEN/Malamud Award, Alistair MacLeod has been recognized with the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, among many others, and in 2008 was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in recognition of his commitment to Canadian literature.

**Amy Hempel's** short stories have been widely prized for their innovation of form and distinctive voice. Her collections include *Reasons to Live*, *At the Gates of the Animal Kingdom*, *Tumble Home*, *The Dog of the Marriage*, and *The Collected Stories of Amy Hempel*, which was a 2007 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction Finalist, an Ambassador Book Award winner, and named one of the *New York Times* Ten Best Books of the Year. She has also been honored with a 2007 United States Artists Foundation Award, a 2008 Rea Award, an Award for Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. For the last fifteen years, Hempel has taught in the MFA program at Bennington College, in the classrooms where Bernard Malamud himself once taught. "It is thrilling to receive an award named for Bernard Malamud," Ms. Hempel writes, "whose stories are as relevant now as they were when he wrote them, tough and beautiful and uncompromising but not didactic."

The **PEN/Malamud Award** includes a **reading in the 2009/10 PEN/Faulkner reading series at the Folger Shakespeare Library** and a **prize of \$5,000**, which will be shared by MacLeod and Hempel, following a policy to award the prize jointly to a more established writer and one at the beginning of a literary career, replicating Bernard Malamud's relationship as a master writer to younger writers. Members of this year's selection committee include a panel of PEN/Faulkner board members and representatives of Malamud's literary executors.

**Previous PEN/Malamud Award winners** include: John Updike, Saul Bellow, George Garrett, Frederick Busch and Andre Dubus, Eudora Welty, Peter Taylor, Grace Paley, Stuart Dybek and William Maxwell, Joyce Carol Oates, Alice Munro, John Barth, T. Coraghessan Boyle, Ann Beattie and Nathan Englander, Sherman Alexie and Richard Ford, Junot Diaz and Ursula K. Le Guin, Barry Hannah and Maile Meloy, Richard Bausch and Nell Freudenberger, Lorrie Moore, Tobias Wolff and Adam Haslett, and Elizabeth Spencer, Cynthia Ozick and Peter Ho Davies.

During his thirty-seven year writing career, **Bernard Malamud** received the National Book Award twice as well as the Pulitzer Prize, a PEN/Faulkner Award nomination, and the Gold Medal for lifetime achievement from the

National Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. His published works include: *The Natural*, *The Magic Barrel*, *The Fixer*, and *The Stories of Bernard Malamud*. Talking about the art of the short story, Malamud said, “I like packing a self or two into a few pages, predicting lifetimes. The drama is terse, happens faster, and is often outlandish. A short story is a way of indicating the complexity of life in a few pages, producing the surprise and effect of a profound knowledge in a short time.”

The **PEN/Faulkner Foundation**, now celebrating its twenty-ninth year, is committed to building audiences for literature and bringing writers together with their readers. This mission is accomplished through **readings at the Folger** by distinguished writers who have won the respect of readers and writers alike; the **PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction**, the largest Peer- juried award for fiction in the United States; the **PEN/Malamud Award**, honoring excellence in the short story; and the **Writers in Schools** program, which brings nationally and internationally-acclaimed authors to public high school classrooms in Washington, DC; Atlanta; and Kansas City, to discuss their work with the students.

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