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DOYALI ISLAM NAMED WINNER OF THE 11th ANNUAL BATTLE OF THE BARDS

Toronto's most popular poetry competition concludes with honourable mention to runners up Michelle Brown and Jay MillAr



Pictured: Doyali Islam / Photo credit: Toronto International Festival of Authors

TORONTO, ON — The [Toronto International Festival of Authors](#) (TIFA) announced today that Toronto's **Doyali Islam** has been selected as winner of the **11th Annual Battle of the Bards** poetry competition, with honourable mention to Toronto poets **Michelle Brown** (originally from Victoria, BC) and **Jay MillAr**. Twenty poets read their work on stage Wednesday night in friendly rivalry at **Harbourfront Centre** as part of this popular annual event, presented in partnership with **NOW Magazine** and hosted by **Susan G. Cole**.

Doyali Islam was chosen as winner following a moving reading from her newest book, *heft* (McClelland & Stewart, 2019), which was released only a week ago. Islam was selected by a jury composed of **Geoffrey E. Taylor** (TIFA Director) and established poets **Andy McGuire** (*Country Club*) and **Alison Pick** (*Strangers With The Same Dream*).

"There was a remarkable showing of range and talent in this year's competition, so selecting one winner was a challenge," says Taylor. "All the poets performed with passion, yet the judges felt that on this day, Islam's lyricism stood out and the audience hung on every word."

The winner and runners up will receive invitations to read at the 40th anniversary edition of the

11th POETRY NOW

Toronto International Festival of Authors, taking place October 24 – November 3, 2019 in Toronto. The winner will also receive complimentary advertising for her book in *NOW* Magazine.

The Battle of the Bards is part of the Toronto International Festival of Authors' 45th season of year-round programming, which will continue through to the end of June 2019. For more information, visit festivalofauthors.ca/events or call the **Harbourfront Centre Box Office at 416-973-4000**.

About the Winner

Doyali Islam's poems have been published in *Kenyon Review Online*, *The Fiddlehead*, and *The Best Canadian Poetry in English*, and have won several national contests and prizes. Doyali serves as the poetry editor of *Arc Poetry Magazine*. In 2017, she was a guest on CBC Radio's *The Sunday Edition* and was a poetry finalist for the National Magazine Awards. She lives in Toronto. Doyali-islam.com

About Toronto International Festival of Authors

The Toronto International Festival of Authors (TIFA) is Canada's largest and longest-running festival of words and ideas. Since 1974, it has hosted over 9,000 authors from more than 100 countries, including 22 Nobel Laureates and countless other award winners. Mandated to advance the art of literature, TIFA connects curious readers of every kind with leading authors and provides forums to showcase Canadian talent to the world. TIFA presents events and programmes all year round and will celebrate the 40th edition of the Festival Oct. 24 – Nov. 3, 2019. Based at Harbourfront Centre.

About NOW

Celebrating over 37 years as Toronto's leading independent media voice, NOW provides approximately half a million weekly readers with 24/7 coverage of everything cultural and political in our city. As the go-to source for local news, reviews, event listings and much more, NOW creates inclusive networks between all communities. Visit nowtoronto.com for more info.

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