

# UBC's Master of Arts in Children's Literature Program

*Presents: A talk and reading from his work by Canadian poet for children and young adults*

## ***JonArno Lawson* - A Talk from the Bottom of the Box: Reflections of an Award-winning Poet for Youth**

**Wednesday, September 25th, 2013, 12:00 – 1:00 pm**

**The Dodson Room**, Room 302, Level 3, Chapman Learning Commons, Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, 1961 East Mall, University of British Columbia

*Refreshments served*

JonArno Lawson is one of Canada's most noted poets for children and young adults. He is the author of a range of books for all ages, from collections of poetry for teens to single poem picture books. He also is a writer of non-fiction. He will discuss his creative and publishing process and read from his books.

Lawson lives in Toronto with his wife and three children. His most recent books are *Down in the Bottom of the Bottom of the Box* (Porcupine's Quill), illustrated by Alec Dempster, and *Enjoy it While it Hurts* (Wolsak & Wynn), which he illustrated himself. In 2013 he won the PRISM non-fiction award for a piece he wrote called Horse Cam.

He is a two-time winner of the prestigious award for children's poetry, The *Lion and the Unicorn Award* for Excellence in North American Poetry. The 2009 jury stated that his award-winning *A Voweller's Bestiary, From Aardvark to Guineafowl (And H)* (illustrated by Lawson; Porcupine's Quill), is a nonconventional daunting experiment. The poems have a lively rigor. "Not just a fine book of poetry – also a benchmark, a signpost gesturing toward the future of the genre. Indeed, [it] is not just this year's best book of children's poetry, it is one of the year's best books of poetry period."

The 2007 jury stated that Lawson's *Black Stars in a White Night Sky* (illustrated by Sherwin Tija; Pedlar Press) is a "beautifully designed book filled with well-crafted poems.... Lawson is in a class by himself: he plays, but he does not pander. His book is a lot of smart fun because it keeps changing gears.... Lawson bravely engages with the dark side of childhood—not excessively or ghoulishly, but just enough to remind us that it's not all lollipops and turkey pie. Lawson also possesses what few poets for the young demonstrate: a truly subversive wit.... Finally, Lawson's tonal range is impressive indeed. While he is undoubtedly one of today's most gifted poets of humorous and nonsense verse, he is also capable of lyric moments that ring true."

Lawson's young adult poetry collection, *Think Again* (illustrated by Julie Morstad; Kids Can Press), was a 2010 Junior Library Guild Selection, a Quill and Quire 2010 Book of the Year Selection and was shortlisted for the 2011 Ruth and Sylvia Schwartz Children's Book Award.

Lawson has a BA in English literature from McGill University. He has taught children's poetry in the Master of Arts in Children's Literature Program at Simmons College, Boston, and gives workshops for children and adults.

*This colloquium is sponsored by the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, the Departments of Language and Literacy Education, English and the Creative Writing Program.*

The UBC Master of Arts in Children's Literature Program is a Multidisciplinary Degree Program offered by two faculties and four departments: Creative Writing, English and the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies in the Faculty of Arts; and Language and Literacy Education in the Faculty of Education.