

## **PEN Canada's Honorary Patron wins Manhae Prize for Literature**

John Ralston Saul, Honorary Patron of PEN Canada and President of International PEN has been awarded the 2010 Manhae Grand Prize for Literature.

Established in 1996, to honour Buddhist reformer and poet Han Yong-un, who wrote under the penname 'Manhae', the prize has become one of South Korea's most prestigious literary awards. Each year, the Society for the Promotion and Practice of Manhae's Thoughts recognizes work that promotes equality, freedom and harmony in art, literature, missionary and social work, and peace. Nobel Laureates Nelson Mandela, Wole Soyinka, the Dalai Lama and Iranian human rights defender Shirin Ebadi are all former winners.

John Ralston Saul described his selection as "very humbling," adding that, "For me, literature and freedom of expression are one and the same thing. This prize is, in part, an expression of that. One of the reasons I believe so much in PEN is because I believe in literature."

The celebrated author of five internationally acclaimed novels, including *The Birds of Prey*, *Baraka*, and *The Paradise Eater*, Saul is best known for the non-fiction trilogy *Voltaire's Bastards: The Dictatorship of Reason in the West*, *The Doubter's Companion: A Dictionary of Aggressive Common Sense* and *The Unconscious Civilization*, based on his 1995 Massey lectures. In 1996 Saul won a Governor General's Literary Award for non-fiction for *The Unconscious Civilization*. In 2004 he received a Pablo Neruda Medal of Honour from the government of Chile. A past president of PEN Canada, in October 2009 Saul became the first Canadian ever elected President of International PEN.

President of PEN Canada, Ellen Seligman commented that "John Ralston's Saul's deep and sustaining commitment to the principle of freedom of expression as a basic human right has informed his creative life and his public life, and we are all the beneficiaries."

In August 2010, Saul will travel to South Korea for the awards ceremony in Manhae village, close to the Baekdam (Hundred Ponds) Buddhist Temple, where Manhae composed his famous poem "The Silence of Love."