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**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## A Nobel Laureate and a New Novelist Win Anisfield-Wolf Book Prize

CLEVELAND, Ohio (April 22, 2013) – The Cleveland Foundation today announced the winners of the 78<sup>th</sup> Annual Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards [www.Anisfield-Wolf.org](http://www.Anisfield-Wolf.org). They are:

- **Laird Hunt**, *Kind One*, Fiction
- **Kevin Powers**, *The Yellow Birds*, Fiction
- **Eugene Gloria**, *My Favorite Warlord*, Poetry
- **Andrew Solomon**, *Far From the Tree*, Nonfiction
- **Wole Soyinka**, Lifetime Achievement

Past winners include five writers who went on to win Nobel prizes – Nadine Gordimer, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Toni Morrison, Wole Soyinka, and Derek Walcott.

“The 2013 Anisfield-Wolf winners are exemplars who broaden our vision of race and diversity,” said Henry Louis Gates, Jr., who chairs the jury. “This year, there is exceptional writing about the war in Iraq, slavery on a Kentucky pig farm, the Filipino experience in the U.S., and the complexity of families in which a child is radically different from parents.”

Gates directs the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African-American Research at Harvard University, where he is also the Alphonse Fletcher University Professor. He praised the singular achievement of Wole Soyinka, the Nigerian whose writing won a Nobel prize in 1986, three years after he won an Anisfield-Wolf award for his memoir, “Ake: The Years of Childhood.”

Cleveland Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer Ronald B. Richard said this year’s winners reflect founder Edith Anisfield Wolf’s belief in the unifying power of the written word.

“The Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards rose from the philanthropic vision of one woman who realized that literature could advance the ongoing dialogue about race, culture, ethnicity, and our shared humanity,” Richard said.

### About the Winners

*Kind One* is a haunting novel that explores the uncanny intimacy between slave and master. In understated prose, the story tells of two slave sisters who turn tables on their mistress and take her captive after her Kentucky farmer husband dies. In his sixth book, Laird Hunt spans the period between the 1830s and 1930, and brings fresh imagining to our nation’s most difficult subject. He lives in Denver, Colorado.

*The Yellow Birds* is a scalding first book that pivots on the last weeks of friendship between 18-year-old Private Daniel Murphy and 21-year-old Private John Bartle, who makes a rash promise to Mrs. Murphy to bring her son home safely from Iraq. Writer Kevin Powers served as a machine gunner in Iraq in 2004 and 2005. He writes a tightly focused, hypnotic story that spirals around his central character’s isolation. Powers, a Virginian who enlisted at age 17, has created a piercing portrayal of war.

Eugene Gloria collects 35 striking poems in *My Favorite Warlord*, a vivid, fast-paced book that looks at Filipino heritage, samurai, fathers, masculinity, and memory. “Here, On Earth” considers the bright faces in a restaurant in “a bad neighborhood,” while “Allegory of the Laundromat” recalls 1967 with “astronauts burning in their space capsule, Wole Soyinka being hauled to jail...” Gloria, born in Manila, teaches at DePauw University in Indiana.

*Far From the Tree* is a magisterial book from Andrew Solomon that parses diversity in its most intimate setting: the family. Solomon considers how parents navigate the world when a child is deaf, autistic, a dwarf, a criminal, a protégée, has Down Syndrome, and four other signal identities. Juror Steven Pinker wrote: “This is a monumental book, the kind that appears once in a decade. It could not be a better example of the literature of diversity.” Solomon lives in New York City.

Wole Soyinka is a Nigerian playwright, poet, essayist, and profile in courage. At 78, he still afflicts the political tyrannies in his path, as he has since he was a young man. In 1967, Nigerian authorities arrested Soyinka and placed him in solitary confinement for 22 months for attempting to broker peace during the Biafran War. The prisoner wrote on scraps of paper, which contributed to “The Man Died: Prison Notes of Wole Soyinka.” The Nobel Jury cited him as a writer “who in a wide cultural perspective and with poetic overtones fashions the drama of existence.” Soyinka splits his time between his Nigerian home in Ogun state and teaching at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.

#### About the Anisfield-Wolf Prize

The Anisfield-Wolf winners will be honored in Cleveland Sept. 12 at a ceremony at the Ohio Theatre hosted by the Cleveland Foundation and emceed by Jury Chair Gates. Poet **Rita Dove**, novelist **Joyce Carol Oates**, psychologist **Steven Pinker**, and historian **Simon Schama** also deliberate on the jury. The Cleveland Foundation has shepherded the book awards since 1963. They remain the only juried American literary competition devoted to recognizing books that have made an important contribution to society’s understanding of racism and the diversity of cultures. For additional information, including a complete list of winners, visit [www.Anisfield-Wolf.org](http://www.Anisfield-Wolf.org).

#### About the Cleveland Foundation

Established in 1914, the Cleveland Foundation is the world's first community foundation and one of the largest today, with assets of \$1.86 billion and 2012 grants of \$91 million. Through the generosity of donors, the foundation improves the lives of Greater Clevelanders by building community endowment, addressing needs through grantmaking, and providing leadership on vital issues. The foundation tackles the community's priority areas – economic transformation, public-school improvement, youth development, neighborhood revitalization, and arts advancement – and responds to the community's needs. For more information on the Cleveland Foundation, visit [www.ClevelandFoundation.org](http://www.ClevelandFoundation.org).

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