

Anne Michaels



Photo from [The Guardian](#)

Anne Michaels published her first novel, [Fugitive Pieces](#), in 1997 to rave reviews. It spent two years on the bestseller list here and was translated into over twenty languages. It also received the Orange Prize and the Guardian Fiction Prize.

Reading that novel when it came out, I remember being transfixed by the juxtaposition of the atrocities committed by the Nazis in Poland and the astonishing rescue of a thin child, a sole survivor of his Jewish family. The small boy was literally worn inside the overcoat of his rescuer while they passed the barrier. Years later in Toronto, the man this boy has become is still haunted by his past.

Her second novel, [The Winter Vault](#) (2009) is written in the same lush and lyrical prose. It ranges across Egypt in the days of building the Aswan High Dam, then across Montreal, Toronto and rural Ontario, then returns to scenes of war in Warsaw.

Interviewed by [Sarah Crown](#) in *The Guardian* when the second book came out, Michaels said she felt a profound and inescapable sense of responsibility to her historical material. At the same time, she wished to step back from personal identification with the specifics of the shared history carried by the post-war generation.

On publication of *The Winter Vault*, [Gerald Hannon](#) reported on the author in *Quill and Quire*.

Michaels was born and educated in Toronto, where she took an honours BA in English at the U of T. Before writing her novels, [Anne Michaels](#) published three collections of poetry.

[The Weight of Oranges](#) came out in 1986, and won the Commonwealth Prize for the Americas. In 1991 *Miner's Pond* won the CAA Literary Award and was shortlisted for the Governor General's and the Trillium Award. [Skin Divers](#) appeared in 1999.