

## 2024 CALGARY AWARDS W.O. MITCHELL BOOK PRIZE RECIPIENT

### Summary

Award Categories	Selected Recipient(s)
The City of Calgary W.O. Mitchell Book Prize	Clem Martini <i>Cantata</i> and <i>The Extinction Therapist</i>

### **W.O. Mitchell Book Prize**

**Clem Martini**

***Cantata***

Clem Martini's award-winning play, *Cantata: Rumours of My Crazy, Useless Life* provides a window into the experience of people going through the hidden, high-stakes struggles of elder care and mental illness. In *Cantata*, Martin Bussinger discovers his elderly mother's health and mental acuity is deteriorating, facing him with emotional and medical problems that feel almost unsolvable. He realizes that negotiating the delicate network of caregiving, strung together with the further challenge of supporting a brother living with a mental illness, places him in a situation that is simultaneously heartrending and darkly comic. *Cantata* was named Most Outstanding New Play in the Calgary Theatre Critics' Awards.

### ***The Extinction Therapist***

Dr. Marshall's therapeutic practice offers group support to those threatened with extinction. A libidinous woolly mammoth, a testy short-eared shrew, the uncompromising smallpox virus, an insecure tyrannosaurus rex and the hapless Minister for the Environment convene to receive therapy, in an attempt to come to terms with the complicated, volatile feelings associated with their precarious life-and-death circumstances. Then things get complicated.

**BIO** (From [durvile.com](http://durvile.com)):

**Clem Martini** (born at Calgary 25 Aug 1956) is a celebrated playwright, novelist, and screenwriter with over thirty plays, and thirteen books of fiction and nonfiction to his credit. His text on playwriting, *The Blunt Playwright* is employed by colleges and universities across the country. His books include *Upside Down: A Family's Journey Through Mental Illness*, the W.O. Mitchell Award-winning *Bitter Medicine: A Graphic Memoir of Mental Illness* and the Alberta Trade Non-Fiction Book of the Year Award-winning, *The Unravelling*. A passionate advocate on behalf of issues associated with suicide, mental-illness-related-stigma, and family caregiving, Clem Martini was a member of the Canadian Mental Health Commission, and has been an invited speaker at a number of conferences, symposia and health related gatherings. He is a Fellow of The Royal Society of Canada, a recipient of the ATB Financial Healing through the

Arts Award and a Professor of Drama in the School of Creative and Performing Arts at the University of Calgary.