Canadian wins Nobel for 'inventive' literature

Stockholm: Canadian poet, essayist and translator Anne Carson won the Nobel Prize in literature on Thursday for "bold and inventive" works that fuse the classical and the modern and blur the boundaries of poetry and prose.

The Toronto-born Carson, 76, draws on themes from classical Greek and Roman literature, modern influences and personal experience for genre-blending works that have ranged from translations of ancient Greek poets to collaborations with dancers and musicians, including Laurie Anderson and Lou Reed.

The Swedish Academy that awards the prize said she won "for her bold and inventive oeuvre that, in playful dialogue with the classical tradition, has created new forms for contemporary literature".



Anne Carson. (AP)

The permanent secretary of the academy said the author was in Iceland "listening to the wind" when the academy reached her to notify her of the honour.

"She was very taken by surprise," Ingrid Carlberg said.

Asked how she felt about the award, Carson told the Icelandic public broadcaster RUV: "I think they're all crazy." She described the conversation with the academy as "rather halting".

"They have the usual questions, and I have no answers," she said.

She said poetry is "probably more useful than prose right now because it's faster, and everybody is in a hurry. So basically I think it's good because it's brief. Except Homer. Homer's not brief".

Carson is among the more high-profile recent winners of the Nobel Prize in Literature, which often honours authors little known outside of the literary world and is sometimes criticised for valuing literary experimentation over the ability to connect with a broad readership.

However, the prize can also introduce readers to writers and works beyond their own languages or reading habits.

Asked how the prize would change her sales, she said: "I'll get a sticker on the front of my book. Stickers help."

AP