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National Book Foundation Announces Changes in the National Book Awards Review and Selection Process

Changes Meant to Expand the Number and Type of Participants

After a year of discussion and study, which included 60 individual interviews and 200 questionnaires with varied members of the book community, the board of the National Book Foundation announced today that it will expand the number of participants in the National Book Awards process by instituting the following changes:

The four judging panels—Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, and Young People’s Literature—will be open to panelists that are not writers in that field, though they will still be required to have expertise in the field. These “non-writers” will include literary critics, librarians, and booksellers, and may include retired editors. In order to recruit these new panelists, the Foundation’s Executive Director will be responsible for expanding the pool and will survey the field for suggestions. The number of panelists in each genre will remain at five.

In addition, the Foundation will expand the number of “National Book Awards Books” by creating a “long-list,” of ten books for each category, selected by each panel five weeks before the announcement of the five Finalists, thereby doubling the number of National Book Award designations. It is expected that this will open the process to more and varied books from across the country. In 2013, the long lists will be announced on September 12th (40 titles) the Finalists on October 15th (twenty titles) and the National Book Award Winners on November 20th (four titles).

The Mission of the National Book Foundation is to celebrate the best of American literature, to expand its audience, and to enhance the cultural value of good writing in America.

About the *National Book Awards*

The nation’s most prestigious literary prize, the National Book Awards has a stellar record of identifying and rewarding quality writing. In 1950, William Carlos Williams was the first winner in Poetry, the following year William Faulkner was honored, and so on through the years. Many previous Winners of a National Book Award are now firmly established in the canon of American literature. On November 18th, the National Book Awards will be presented in the categories of Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, and Young People’s Literature.