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2017 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS FINALISTS ANNOUNCED

Twenty Finalists to contend for National Book Awards in the categories of Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, and Young People's Literature

New York City, October 4, 2017: The twenty Finalists for the 2017 National Book Awards for Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, and Young People's Literature were announced today with *CBS This Morning*. The five Finalists in each category were selected by a panel of literary experts, and were advanced from the Longlists announced in September. Each Finalist category includes one writer previously honored by the National Book Awards: 2011 National Book Award Winner Jesmyn Ward for Fiction, 1973 Winner and 1980 Finalist Frances FitzGerald for Nonfiction, five-time Finalist Frank Bidart for Poetry, and 2009 and 2010 Finalist Rita Williams-Garcia for Young People's Literature. Four of the twenty Finalists are debuts.

Publishers submitted a total of 1,529 books for this year's National Book Awards: 394 in Fiction, 553 in Nonfiction, 245 in Poetry, and 337 in Young People's Literature. Judges' decisions are made independently of the National Book Foundation staff and Board of Directors; deliberations are strictly confidential. To be eligible for a 2017 National Book Award, a book must have been published in the United States between December 1, 2016 and November 30, 2017, and must have been written by a United States citizen.

The Winners will be announced on Wednesday, November 15 at the 68th National Book Awards Ceremony and Benefit Dinner at Cipriani Wall Street in New York City. Two lifetime achievement awards will also be presented at the Awards dinner: Annie Proulx will be recognized with the National Book Foundation's Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, presented by Anne Hathaway. Dick Robinson will receive the Foundation's Literarian Award for Outstanding Contribution to the American Literary Community.

Finalists for Fiction:

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Elliot Ackerman, *Dark at the Crossing*
Knopf / Penguin Random House

Lisa Ko, *The Leavers*
Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill / Workman Publishing

Min Jin Lee, *Pachinko*
Grand Central Publishing / Hachette Book Group

Carmen Maria Machado, *Her Body and Other Parties: Stories*
Graywolf Press

Jesmyn Ward, *Sing, Unburied, Sing*
Scribner / Simon & Schuster

In **Elliot Ackerman's** *Dark at the Crossing*, an Arab American man attempting to enter Syria wrestles with loss, grief, and redemption as he desperately searches for a cause. One of two debuts on the Fiction list, **Lisa Ko's** *The Leavers* tells the story of a son and the mother who abandoned him attempting to make sense of their circumstances while worlds apart. *Pachinko* by **Min Jin Lee** chronicles the lives of a Korean family forced from their homeland as, over the course of many years, they experience the particular challenges of displacement. The second of the Fiction debuts, **Carmen Maria Machado's** story collection *Her Body and Other Parties* is an eerie and provocative debut that delves into the realities and violence of women's lives. **Jesmyn Ward's** *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, her first novel since her 2011 National Book Award Winner for Fiction, depicts a fractured Mississippi family struggling to stay connected as they road trip across the state.

Finalists for Nonfiction:

Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge*
37 INK / Atria / Simon & Schuster

Frances FitzGerald, *The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America*
Simon & Schuster

Masha Gessen, *The Future Is History: How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia*
Riverhead Books / Penguin Random House

David Grann, *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*
Doubleday / Penguin Random House

Nancy MacLean, *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America*
Viking / Penguin Random House

Erica Armstrong Dunbar's *Never Caught* details the relatively-unknown history of Ona Judge, a woman who escaped slavery and spent her life pursued by her former owners, George and Martha Washington. In *The*

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Evangelicals, 1973 National Book Award Winner and 1980 Finalist **Frances FitzGerald** details the ways in which Christian evangelicals have profoundly shaped our nation. In *The Future Is History*, **Masha Gessen** presents a cautionary tale for our current political moment as she chronicles the lives of four Russian-born people whose experiences provide insight into the reemergence of totalitarianism in modern Russia. **David Grann's** *Killers of the Flower Moon* exposes a little-explored story: the systematic murders of the Osage people in the 1920s, crimes that led, in part, to the formation of the FBI. *Democracy in Chains* by **Nancy MacLean** looks at the rise of the radical right and their organized attempts to enmesh themselves in American politics.

Finalists for Poetry:

Frank Bidart, *Half-light: Collected Poems 1965-2016*
Farrar, Straus and Giroux / Macmillan Publishers

Leslie Harrison, *The Book of Endings*
University of Akron Press

Layli Long Soldier, *WHEREAS*
Graywolf Press

Shane McCrae, *In the Language of My Captor*
Wesleyan University Press

Danez Smith, *Don't Call Us Dead: Poems*
Graywolf Press

The expansive work of five-time National Book Awards Finalist **Frank Bidart** is brought together in *Half-light: Collected Poems 1965-2016*. *The Book of Endings* by **Leslie Harrison** seeks to find meaning in death, decay, and grief, taking instruction from the natural world. *WHEREAS* by **Layli Long Soldier** attempts to make sense of the injustice and deep-seated trauma inextricable from a land's history. **Shane McCrae's** *In the Language of My Captor* concerns itself with ideas of freedom and captivity, particularly the ways in which they are tied to race and illusion. **Danez Smith's** sophomore collection, *Don't Call Us Dead*, confronts a world where violence is enacted daily upon vulnerable bodies and dreams of a safer reality.

Finalists for Young People's Literature:

Elana K. Arnold, *What Girls Are Made Of*
Carolrhoda Lab / Lerner Publishing Group

Robin Benway, *Far from the Tree*
HarperTeen / HarperCollinsPublishers

Erika L. Sánchez, *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*

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Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers / Penguin Random House

Rita Williams-Garcia, *Clayton Byrd Goes Underground*
Amistad / HarperCollinsPublishers

Ibi Zoboi, *American Street*
Balzer + Bray / HarperCollinsPublishers

In **Elana K. Arnold's** *What Girls Are Made Of*, a teenager told from an early age that love is not unconditional must come to her own conclusions as she confronts the challenges of adolescence in this unflinching coming-of-age story. **Robin Benway's** *Far From the Tree*, tells the story of a young woman adopted at birth who goes in search of her biological siblings, changing her conception of family bonds. In *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* by **Erika L. Sánchez**, the daughter of immigrant parents attempts to chart her own path for her life despite her parents' suffocating expectations and the lingering shadow of the sister she has recently lost. **Rita Williams-Garcia**, a National Book Award Finalist in both 2009 and 2010, infuses the magic of blues into *Clayton Byrd Goes Underground*, the story of a young boy who runs away from home after the unexpected death of the grandfather he idolizes. **Ibi Zoboi** draws from her experiences as a Haitian immigrant in her debut novel, *American Street*, in which a young girl must navigate an unfamiliar Detroit after her mother is detained by immigration during their move to the United States.

Finalists' bios are below, and you can find more information on the authors, the National Book Awards, and the 2017 judges at nationalbook.org.

The 68th National Book Awards Ceremony and Benefit Dinner will be streamed via Facebook Live and also available at the NBF website, www.nationalbook.org. Winners of the National Book Awards receive \$10,000 and a bronze medal and statue; Finalists receive \$1,000 and a bronze medal. The Benefit is hosted by a dinner committee including Lea Carpenter, Caitlin Hoyt, Luke Janklow, Deborah Needleman, Nicolas Niarchos, Tracy Sherrod, and Shelley Wanger.

The invitation-only Awards Ceremony is the culminating event of National Book Awards Week. The celebration begins on November 13 with **5 Under 35**, the Foundation's invitation-only celebration of emerging fiction writers selected by National Book Award Winners, Finalists, and former 5 Under 35 honorees. On the morning of November 14, the **National Book Awards Teen Press Conference** will take place at the 92nd Street Y in New York City. On the evening of November 14, all Finalists will read from their book at the **National Book Awards Finalists Reading** at The New School. The Finalists Reading is open to the public; tickets are \$10 and are available from The New School:

http://events.newschool.edu/event/national_book_awards_reading_2017#.Wc1k57KGOUk.

Fiction Finalist Biographies:

Elliot Ackerman, author of the critically acclaimed novel *Green on Blue*, is based out of Istanbul, where he has covered the Syrian Civil War since 2013. His writings have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *The New*

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Republic, and *The New York Times Magazine*, among other publications, and his stories have been included in *The Best American Short Stories*. He is both a former White House Fellow and Marine, and served five tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan where he received the Silver Star, the Bronze Star for Valor, and the Purple Heart.

Lisa Ko's fiction has appeared in *Best American Short Stories 2016*, *Apogee Journal*, *Narrative*, *Copper Nickel*, the *Asian Pacific American Journal*, and elsewhere. She has been awarded fellowships and residencies from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the MacDowell Colony, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Writers OMI at Ledig House, the Jerome Foundation, and Blue Mountain Center, among others. She was born in New York City, where she now lives. Visit her at lisa-ko.com.

Min Jin Lee's debut novel, *Free Food for Millionaires*, was one of the "Top 10 Novels of the Year" for *The Times* (London), NPR's *Fresh Air*, and *USA Today*. Her short fiction has been featured on NPR's *Selected Shorts*. Her writings have appeared in *Condé Nast Traveler*, *The Times* (London), *Vogue*, *Travel+Leisure*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times Magazine*, and *Food & Wine*. Her essays and literary criticism have been anthologized widely. She served as a columnist for the *Chosun Ilbo*, the leading paper of South Korea. She lives in New York with her family.

Carmen Maria Machado's fiction and nonfiction has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Granta*, NPR, *Guernica*, *Electric Literature*, *Gulf Coast*, *Tin House*, *Best American Science Fiction and Fantasy*, *The Best Horror of the Year*, *Year's Best Weird Fiction*, and *Best Women's Erotica*. Her short story "The Husband Stitch" was nominated for the Shirley Jackson and Nebula Awards, awarded a Pushcart Prize Special Mention, and longlisted for the James Tiptree, Jr. Literary Award. She holds an MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop and has been awarded fellowships and residencies from the Copernicus Society of America, the Elizabeth George Foundation, the CINTAS Foundation, the Speculative Literature Foundation, the University of Iowa, Yaddo, Hedgebrook, and the Millay Colony for the Arts. She is the artist in residence at the University of Pennsylvania, and lives in Philadelphia with her wife.

Jesmyn Ward received her MFA from the University of Michigan and was a recipient of a Stegner Fellowship, a John and Renee Grisham Writers Residency, and the Strauss Living Prize. She is currently an associate professor of creative writing at Tulane University and author of the novels *Where the Line Bleeds* and *Salvage the Bones*, which won the 2011 National Book Award. She is also the author of the memoir, *Men We Reaped*, which was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and won the Chicago Tribune Heartland Prize and the Media for a Just Society Award. She lives in Mississippi.

Nonfiction Finalist Biographies:

Erica Armstrong Dunbar is the Charles and Mary Beard Professor of History at Rutgers University. Her publications, teaching, and documentary appearances have placed her among a small number of African American women scholars who study black life, culture, and gender up through the Civil War. Dunbar received her B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania, where she majored in History and African American Studies and her Ph.D. in American History from Columbia University. Her first book, *A Fragile Freedom: African American Women and Emancipation in the Antebellum City* was published by Yale University in 2008. Her newest book, *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge*, was published in 2017 by 37 INK/Atria/Simon & Schuster. She has been the recipient of Ford, Mellon, and Social Science Research

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Council fellowships and is the inaugural Director of the Program in African American History at the Library Company of Philadelphia, the nation's first successful lending library and the oldest cultural institution in the country.

Frances FitzGerald is the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, the Bancroft Prize, and a prize from the National Academy of Arts and Sciences. She is the author of *Fire in the Lake: the Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam*; *America Revised: History School Books in the Twentieth Century*; *Cities on a Hill: A Journey through Contemporary American Cultures*; *Way Out in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War*; and *Vietnam: Spirits of the Earth*. She has written for *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Harper's*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The Nation*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Esquire*. She lives in New York and Maine with her husband, James Sterba.

Masha Gessen is an award-winning Russian-American journalist who is the author of several books, including the national bestseller *The Man Without A Face: The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin*. Her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books*, *Vanity Fair*, *Slate*, and many other publications, and her many awards include a Carnegie Fellowship and a Guggenheim. She lives in New York City.

David Grann is a staff writer at *The New Yorker* and the best-selling author of *The Lost City of Z*, which was chosen as one of the best books of the year by *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and other publications and has been translated into more than twenty-five languages. He is also the author of *The Devil and Sherlock Holmes*. His work has garnered several honors for outstanding journalism, including a George Polk Award.

Nancy MacLean is the award-winning author of *Behind the Mask of Chivalry* (a *New York Times* "noteworthy" book of the year) and *Freedom Is Not Enough*, which was called by the *Chicago Tribune* "contemporary history at its best." The William Chafe Professor of History and Public Policy at Duke University, she lives in Durham, North Carolina.

Poetry Finalist Biographies:

Frank Bidart is the author of *Metaphysical Dog* (FSG, 2013), *Watching the Spring Festival* (FSG, 2008), *Star Dust* (FSG, 2005), *Desire* (FSG, 1997), and *In the Western Night: Collected Poems 1965-90* (FSG, 1990). He has won many prizes, including the Wallace Stevens Award, the 2007 Bollingen Prize in American Poetry, and the National Book Critics Circle Award. He teaches at Wellesley College and lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Leslie Harrison holds graduate degrees from the Johns Hopkins University and the University of California, Irvine. Her first book, *Displacement*, won the Bakeless Prize and was published by Mariner Books. A long-time resident of Sandisfield, Massachusetts, she now lives and teaches in Baltimore.

Layli Long Soldier holds a B.F.A. from the Institute of American Indian Arts and an M.F.A. from Bard College. She has served as a contributing editor of *Drunken Boat*. Her poems have appeared in *The American Poet*, *The American Reader*, *The Kenyon Review Online*, and other publications. She is the recipient of the 2015 NACF

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National Artist Fellowship, a 2015 Lannan Literary Fellowship, and a 2016 Whiting Award. She lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Shane McCrae is the author of several books of poetry including, most recently, *In the Language of My Captor* (Wesleyan, 2017), as well as *Mule* (Cleveland State University Poetry Center, 2011), *Blood* (Noemi, 2013), *Forgiveness Forgiveness* (Factory Hollow, 2014) and *The Animal Too Big to Kill* (Persea Books, 2015). His work has been featured in *The Best American Poetry 2010*, edited by Amy Gerstler, *The American Poetry Review*, and Poetry Daily. His honors include winner of the 2014 Lexi Rudnitsky/Editor's Choice Award, finalist for the Kate Tufts Discovery Award, a PEN Center USA Literary Award, a Whiting Writer's Award, and a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. McCrae earned a BA from Linfield College, an MA from University of Iowa, an MFA from Iowa Writers' Workshop, and a JD from Harvard Law School. He is an assistant professor at Columbia University and has taught as a creative writing professor at Spalding University and at Oberlin College.

Danez Smith is the author of *[insert] boy*, winner of the Lambda Literary Award for Gay Poetry and the Kate Tufts Discovery Award, and *Don't Call Us Dead*. Smith has received fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, and lives in Minneapolis.

Young People's Literature Finalist Biographies:

Elana K. Arnold writes books for and about children and teens. Some of her books have been included on the Los Angeles Public Library's Best Books of the Year list, the Bank Street Best Children's Books of the Year list, the YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults list, have been ALAN Picks, and have been selected for inclusion in the Amelia Bloomer Project. She holds a master's degree in Creative Writing/Fiction from the University of California, Davis, and currently lives in Huntington Beach, California, with her husband, two children, and a menagerie of animals.

Robin Benway is the acclaimed author of *Emmy & Oliver*; the Also Known As series; *Audrey, Wait!*; and *The Extraordinary Secrets of April, May & June*. Benway's books have been published in sixteen languages, won international awards, and been bestsellers in several countries. Formerly a bookseller and book publicist, she lives in Los Angeles.

Erika L. Sánchez is a poet, novelist and essayist living in Chicago. Erika was a Fulbright Scholar, CantoMundo Fellowship recipient, and Bread Loaf Scholar. Most recently, she was a columnist for *Cosmopolitan for Latinas*, and has written for *Salon*, *Rolling Stone*, *Jezebel*, *The Guardian* and *BuzzFeed*. As a daughter of undocumented Mexican immigrants, Erika has always been determined to defy borders of any kind. Find her on the web at ErikaLSanchez.com and on Twitter @ErikaLSanchez.

Rita Williams-Garcia's Newbery Honor-winning novel, *One Crazy Summer*, was a winner of the Coretta Scott King Author Award, a National Book Award Finalist, the recipient of the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, and a *New York Times* bestseller. The two sequels, *P.S. Be Eleven* and *Gone Crazy in Alabama* were both Coretta Scott King Author Award winners and ALA Notable Children's Books. She is also the author of six distinguished novels for young adults: *Jumped*, a National Book Award Finalist; *No Laughter Here, Every Time a Rainbow Dies* (a Publishers Weekly Best Children's Book), *Fast Talk on a Slow Track* (all ALA Best Books for Young Adults); *Blue*

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Tights; and *Like Sisters on the Homefront*, a Coretta Scott King Honor Book. Rita Williams-Garcia lives in Jamaica, New York, and has two adult daughters, Stephanie and Michelle, and a son-in-law, Adam.

Ibi Zoboi was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti and holds an MFA in Writing for Children & Young Adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts. Her writing has been published in *The New York Times Book Review*, the *Horn Book Magazine*, and *The Rumpus*, among others. Her debut novel, *American Street*, was published by Balzer + Bray, an imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers and has received five starred reviews. She now lives in Brooklyn with her husband, and their three young children.