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FOR RELEASE 10:30 A.M. EDT, SEPTEMBER 13, 2017

2017 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS LONGLIST FOR POETRY

The ten contenders for the National Book Award for Poetry

New York City, September 13, 2017: The National Book Foundation today announced the Longlist for the 2017 National Book Award for Poetry. Finalists will be revealed on October 4.

The Poetry Longlist includes two previous National Book Award Finalists, including Frank Bidart, for whom this is the fifth nomination. The Longlist includes a Pulitzer Prize Nominee, a National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist, a National Book Critics Circle Award Winner, a finalist for the PEN Center USA Award, two Whiting Award Winners, a Lambda Literary Award Winner, and a Walt Whitman Award Winner. These writers represent a wide sampling of American geography, with hometowns in California, Oregon, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, South Carolina, and more. Fifty years separate the youngest and oldest longlisted poets, and three of the ten titles are debut collections.

The expansive work of **Frank Bidart** is brought together in *Half-light: Collected Poems 1965-2016*. Bidart has been a National Book Award Finalist four times, and is a three-time finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Another previous National Book Award Finalist, **Sherod Santos**'s collection, *Square Inch Hours* works to break time into the smallest pieces of the speaker's experience of the world.

Marie Howe's *Magdalene* imagines the biblical Mary Magdalene as a contemporary woman, fully alive in our world yet still tied, in many ways, to the narrative of her namesake.

Three poets with debut collections appear on this year's Longlist. In *When I Grow Up I Want to Be a List of Further Possibilities*, **Chen Chen** explores identity with unending curiosity and humor. **Layli Long Soldier**'s *WHEREAS* seeks to make sense of the injustice and deep-seated trauma inextricable from a land's history. *Afterland* by **Mai Der Vang** excavates the collective memory of generations of her family in a lament of the Hmong people.

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Where Now by **Laura Kasischke** collects new and selected poems in a wide-ranging volume that moves the reader through meditations on family, identity, and the physical and spiritual worlds.

Two of the longlisted titles examine mortality, death, and what comes after. **Danez Smith's** sophomore collection, *Don't Call Us Dead*, confronts a world where violence is enacted daily upon vulnerable bodies and imagines a world where it isn't. *The Book of Endings* by **Leslie Harrison** seeks to find meaning in death, decay, and grief, taking instruction from the natural world.

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.

Publishers submitted a total of 245 books for the 2017 National Book Award for Poetry. The judges for Poetry are Nick Flynn, Jane Mead, Gregory Pardlo, Richard Siken, and Monica Youn (Chair). These distinguished judges were given the charge of selecting what they deem to be the best books of the year. Their 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 written by a US citizen and published in the United States between December 1, 2016 and November 30, 2017.

The National Book Award Finalists will be announced on October 4 and the Winners at the invitation-only National Book Awards Ceremony and Benefit Dinner on November 15 in New York City.

2017 Longlist for the National Book Award for Poetry:

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

Chen Chen, *When I Grow Up I Want to Be a List of Further Possibilities*
BOA Editions, Ltd.

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

Marie Howe, *Magdalene: Poems*
W. W. Norton & Company

Laura Kasischke, *Where Now: New and Selected Poems*
Copper Canyon Press

Layli Long Soldier, *WHEREAS*
Graywolf Press

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

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Sherod Santos, *Square Inch Hours*

W. W. Norton & Company

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

Graywolf Press

Mai Der Vang, *Afterland*

Graywolf Press

Poetry Biographies:

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

Chen Chen is the author of *When I Grow Up I Want to Be a List of Further Possibilities*, winner of the A. Poulin, Jr. Poetry Prize and out now from BOA Editions. A Kundiman and Lambda Literary Fellow, Chen has also authored two chapbooks. His work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Poetry*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Poem-a-Day*, *Best of the Net*, *The Best American Poetry*, *Bettering American Poetry*, and *The Best American Nonrequired Reading*. He helps edit *Iron Horse* and *Gabby*. He also works on a new journal called *Underblong*, which he co-founded with the poet Sam Herschel Wein. Chen received his MFA from Syracuse University, and lives in Lubbock with his partner.

Leslie Harrison is the author of *The Book of Endings* and *Displacement*. She was born in Germany and raised mostly in New Hampshire. She holds graduate degrees from The Johns Hopkins University and The University of California, Irvine. Her poems have appeared in journals including *Poetry*, *The New Republic*, *The Kenyon Review*, *FIELD*, *Subtropics*, *Pleiades*, *Orion* and elsewhere. She teaches at Towson University.

Marie Howe is the author of four volumes of poetry: *Magdalene: Poems*, *The Kingdom of Ordinary Time*, *What the Living Do*, and *The Good Thief*. She is also the co-editor of a book of essays, *In the Company of My Solitude: American Writing from the AIDS Pandemic*. Her poems have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Poetry*, *Agni*, *Ploughshares*, *Harvard Review*, and *The Partisan Review*, among others.

Laura Kasischke is a poet and novelist whose fiction has been made into several feature-length films. Her book of poems, *Space, in Chains*, won the National Book Critics Circle Award. She currently teaches at the University of Michigan and lives in Chelsea, Michigan.

Layli Long Soldier holds a BFA from the Institute of American Indian Arts and an MFA 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 National Artist Fellowship, a 2015 Lannan Literary Fellowship, and a 2016 Whiting Award. She lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

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Shane McCrae is the author of four other books of poetry, including *The Animal Too Big to Kill*, *Mule*, *Forgiveness Forgiveness*, and *Blood*. He lives in Oberlin, Ohio.

Sherod Santos is the author of seven books of poetry. A National Book Award Finalist, he received an Award in Literature from the Academy of Arts and Letters. He lives in Chicago, where he works in an outreach program for the homeless.

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.

Mai Der Vang is an editorial member of the Hmong American Writers' Circle. Her poetry has appeared in *The New Republic*, *Poetry*, and the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, and her essays have been published in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The San Francisco Chronicle*. She lives in California.

2017 National Book Award Judges for Poetry:

Nick Flynn is the recipient of fellowships and awards from organizations, including the Guggenheim Foundation, PEN, and The Library of Congress. His poems, essays and non-fiction have appeared in many venues, including *The New Yorker*, the *Paris Review*, and National Public Radio's "This American Life". He is currently a professor on the creative writing faculty at the University of Houston, where he is in residence each spring. In 2015 he published his ninth book, *My Feelings* (Graywolf), a collection of poems. His work has been translated into fifteen languages.

Jane Mead is the author of five collections of poetry, most recently *World of Made And Unmade* (Alice James). She's the recipient of a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, a Whiting Writers Award, and a Lannan Foundation Completion Grant. For many years Poet-in-Residence at Wake Forest University, she now manages her family's ranch in northern California and teaches as a visiting writer on occasion, most recently at The University of Iowa Writers Workshop.

Gregory Pardlo's *Digest* (Four Way Books) won the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. His first collection, *Totem*, won the *American Poetry Review*/Honickman Prize in 2007. He is also the author of a memoir in essays forthcoming from Knopf. Pardlo is on the faculty of the M.F.A. program in creative writing at Rutgers University-Camden. He lives with his family in Brooklyn.

Richard Siken is a poet, painter, and filmmaker. He is the author of *Crush*, which won the Yale Series of Younger Poets Competition in 2004. His second book of poems, *War of the Foxes*, was released from Copper Canyon Press in 2015.

Monica Youn (Chair) is the author of *Blackacre*, which has been shortlisted for the National Book Critics Circle Award and the PEN Open Book Award and longlisted for the National Book Award. *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *BuzzFeed* all named *Blackacre* one of the year's best poetry collections. Her previous book *Ignatz* was a finalist for the National Book Award. The daughter of Korean immigrants, she teaches at Princeton University.