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2018 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS LONGLIST FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S LITERATURE

The ten contenders for the National Book Award for Young People's Literature

New York City, September 12, 2018: The National Book Foundation today announced the Longlist for the 2018 National Book Award for Young People's Literature (YPL). Finalists will be revealed on October 10.

Two of this year's YPL Longlisted authors have been previously recognized by the National Book Awards. M. T. Anderson won the National Book Award for Young People's Literature in 2006, was a Finalist in 2002, and was Longlisted in 2015. Elizabeth Partridge has also been previously nominated, as a YPL Finalist in 2002. Authors appearing on this year's Longlist have been honored by the Coretta Scott King Book Awards, the *Los Angeles Times* Book Awards, the American Library Association, the Children's Choice Book Awards, Cave Canem, the Boston Globe-Horn Book Awards, and the Tomie dePaola Awards, among others. Works by these authors have received multiple Newbery Honors and a Newbery Medal. From Massachusetts to Michigan to California, these authors hail from regions across the United States. Two of the authors appearing on the Longlist are debut writers.

Two novels written in verse follow the lives of young women struggling to be heard and seen, many years apart. In **Elizabeth Acevedo's** *New York Times* bestseller, *The Poet X*, a Dominican teen finds her voice in slam poetry, even as she pushes back against a restrictive family life and the unwanted attention of her neighbors. In the debut novel *Blood Water Paint* by **Joy McCullough**, the story of a real-life Italian Baroque painter is imagined in verse, rendering a portrait of a young woman forced to make difficult decisions about her art and her agency following terrible violence.

While the majority of this year's titles are written for young adults, two middle grade works make the Longlist. In *The Journey of Little Charlie*, Newbery Medal winner **Christopher Paul Curtis** tells the story of a twelve-year-old boy in 1858 who, after agreeing to seek out three fugitives in order to pay off a debt, must rise above the ugly values of his time to become an unlikely hero. In **Leslie Connor's** *The Truth as Told by Mason Buttle*, another young protagonist struggles to make sense of the unexplained death of his best friend, as a cycle of bullying continues and a new friend goes missing.

2018 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS LONGLIST FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S LITERATURE

Two titles make use of photographic and illustrated images to examine political and personal histories. In **Elizabeth Partridge's** *Boots on the Ground: America's War in Vietnam*, the 2002 National Book Award Finalist weaves together interviews, narrative, and photos to evoke the tension and emotion that made the Vietnam War one of the most turbulent moments in American history. *Hey, Kiddo* by **Jarrett J. Krosoczka** is a graphic memoir that chronicles a childhood fraught with familial addiction and abandonment, illustrating the exceptional power of art as survival.

A third illustrated title makes use of fantasy and political satire to comment on conflict, discrimination, and the bias inherent in history as told by those on top. **M. T. Anderson**, who has been recognized by the National Book Awards three times previously (2006 Winner, 2002 Finalist, 2015 Longlist), and **Eugene Yelchin** combine narrative prose and extravagant illustration to tell a story of elves, goblins, and intrigue in *The Assassination of Brangwain Spurge*.

Two books follow young women decades apart who are struggling with identity and their place in the world following unspeakable tragedy. In **Vesper Stamper's** illustrated debut novel, *What the Night Sings*, teenaged Gerta survives the horrors of the Holocaust, emerging on the other side lost and bereft, uncertain of how to move forward. The young adult novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* by **Tahereh Mafi** is set in 2002, as a sixteen-year-old Muslim girl copes with adolescence in a post-9/11 world that often feels hostile, finding comfort in music, breakdancing, and an unexpected young romance.

Another novel for young adults melds epistolary storytelling with third-person flashbacks to chronicle the lifelong friendship of two young men whose paths diverge drastically, sending one to death row. **Bryan Bliss's** *We'll Fly Away* addresses questions of loyalty, betrayal, and the irrevocable choices we make.

Publishers submitted a total of 325 books for the 2018 National Book Award for Young People's Literature. The judges for YPL are Robin Benway (Chair), Lamar Giles, Grace Greene, Valerie Koehler, and Mitali Perkins. 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.

The National Book Award Finalists will be announced on October 10, and the Winners announced at the invitation-only National Book Awards Ceremony and Benefit Dinner on November 14 in New York City.

2018 Longlist for the National Book Award for Young People's Literature:

Elizabeth Acevedo, *The Poet X*
HarperTeen / HarperCollins Publishers

M. T. Anderson and Eugene Yelchin, *The Assassination of Brangwain Spurge*
Candlewick Press

Bryan Bliss, *We'll Fly Away*

2018 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS LONGLIST FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S LITERATURE

Greenwillow Books / HarperCollins Publishers

Leslie Connor, *The Truth as Told by Mason Buttle*

Katherine Tegen Books / HarperCollins Publishers

Christopher Paul Curtis, *The Journey of Little Charlie*

Scholastic Press / Scholastic, Inc.

Jarrett J. Krosoczka, *Hey, Kiddo*

Graphix / Scholastic, Inc.

Tahereh Mafi, *A Very Large Expanse of Sea*

HarperTeen / HarperCollins Publishers

Joy McCullough, *Blood Water Paint*

Dutton Children's Books / Penguin Random House

Elizabeth Partridge, *Boots on the Ground: America's War in Vietnam*

Viking Children's Books / Penguin Random House

Vesper Stamper, *What the Night Sings*

Knopf Books for Young Readers / Penguin Random House

Young People's Literature Biographies:

Elizabeth Acevedo is the *New York Times*-bestselling author of the award-winning novel, *The Poet X*. She holds a BA in Performing Arts from The George Washington University and an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Maryland. She has graced stages nationally and internationally including renowned venues such as Lincoln Center, Madison Square Garden, the Kennedy Center of the Performing Arts, South Africa's State Theatre, The Bozar in Brussels, and the National Library of Kosovo. Acevedo is a National Slam Champion and her poems have been published or are forthcoming in *Poetry*, *Puerto Del Sol*, *Callaloo*, *The Notre Dame Review*, and others. Acevedo is a Cave Canem Fellow, Cantomundo Fellow, and participant of the Callaloo Writer's Workshop. She resides in Washington, D.C. with her partner.

M. T. Anderson is the author of the National Book Award Finalist *Feed*, winner of the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize; the National Book Award-winning *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation, Volume I: The Pox Party* and its sequel, *The Kingdom on the Waves*, both *New York Times* bestsellers and Michael L. Printz Honor Books; the National Book Award-longlisted *Symphony for the City of the Dead: Dmitri Shostakovich and the Siege of Leningrad*; *Landscape with Invisible Hand*; and many other books for children and young adults. He lives near Boston, Massachusetts.

2018 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS LONGLIST FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S LITERATURE

Eugene Yelchin is a Russian-American author and illustrator of many books for children, including *Breaking Stalin's Nose*, a Newbery Honor book; *The Haunting of Falcon House*, a Golden Kite Award winner; and *The Rooster Prince of Breslov*, a National Jewish Book Award winner. He has also received the SCBWI Tomie dePaola Award for illustration. He lives in Topanga, California.

Bryan Bliss is the author of *We'll Fly Away*, *Meet Me Here*, and *No Parking at the End Times*. He holds master's degrees in theology and fiction and works as a curriculum designer and developer. His nonfiction has been published in *Image Journal*, along with various other newspapers, magazines, and blogs. He lives in St. Paul, Minnesota, with his wife and two children.

Leslie Connor is the author of several award-winning books for children, including *Waiting for Normal*, winner of the ALA Schneider Family Book Award, *Crunch*, *Miss Bridie Chose a Shovel*, and *Dead on Town Line*, a young adult novel in verse. She lives with her family in Connecticut.

Christopher Paul Curtis was born and reared in Flint, Michigan. After high school graduation, he worked on the assembly line of the Fisher Body Plant/Flint Plant No. 1 and graduated from the Flint branch of the University of Michigan. His first book, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham — 1963*, received a Newbery Honor and Coretta Scott King Honor book citation in 1996, and *Bud, Not Buddy* received the Newbery Medal and Coretta Scott King Award in 2000. His 2007 book *Elijah of Buxton* won a Newbery Honor, the Coretta Scott King Author Award, and the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction in 2008. He lives with his wife and two children in Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

Jarrett J. Krosoczka is a *New York Times*-bestselling author, a two-time winner of the Children's Choice Book Award for the Third to Fourth Grade Book of the Year, an Eisner award nominee, and the author and/or illustrator of more than 30 books for young readers. His work includes several picture books, select volumes of *Star Wars: Jedi Academy*, the *Lunch Lady* graphic novels, and the *Platypus Police Squad* novel series. Jarrett has given two TED Talks, both of which have been curated to the main page of TED.com and have collectively accrued more than two million views online. He is also the host of *The Book Report with JJK* on SiriusXM's Kids Place Live, a weekly segment celebrating books, authors, and reading. Jarrett lives in Western Massachusetts with his wife and children, and their pugs, Ralph and Frank.

Tahereh Mafi is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of the *Shatter Me* series, *Furthermore*, and *Whichwood*. She can usually be found overcaffeinated and stuck in a book. You can find her online just about anywhere @TaherehMafi or on her website, www.taherehbooks.com.

Joy McCullough writes books and plays from her home in the Seattle area, where she lives with her husband and two children. She studied theater at Northwestern University, fell in love with her husband atop a Guatemalan volcano, and now spends her days surrounded by books and kids and chocolate. *Blood Water Paint* is her debut novel.

Elizabeth Partridge graduated with a degree in women's studies from the University of California, Berkeley, and later studied traditional Chinese medicine. She was an acupuncturist for more than 20 years before closing her medical practice to write full time. Elizabeth is a National Book Award Finalist, Printz Honor winner, and author of several nonfiction books for children, including *Restless Spirit: The Life and Work of Dorothea Lange*; *This Land Was*

2018 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS LONGLIST FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S LITERATURE

Made for You and Me: The Life and Songs of Woody Guthrie; John Lennon: All I Want is the Truth; and Marching for Freedom: Walk Together, Children, and Don't You Grow Weary. She lives in the San Francisco Bay area.

Vesper Stamper is an author and illustrator living in the Northeast with her husband, filmmaker Ben Stamper, and her two children. She has an MFA in Illustration as Visual Essay from School of Visual Arts, NYC. Follow her on Instagram and Facebook @vesperillustration, and learn more at vesperillustration.com.

2018 National Book Awards Judges for Young People's Literature:

Robin Benway (Chair) is a *New York Times*-bestselling author of six novels for young people. Her books have received numerous awards and recognition, including starred reviews from *Kirkus Reviews*, *Booklist*, and *Publishers Weekly*, and have been published in more than 20 countries. Her most recent book, *Far From the Tree*, won the 2017 National Book Award for Young People's Literature. Robin grew up in Orange County, California, and is a graduate of UCLA. She lives in Los Angeles.

Lamar Giles is the author of the Edgar Award Nominated *Fake ID* and *Endangered*. His latest, *Overtuned*, was a *Kirkus Reviews* Best YA Novel for 2017. He is a founding member of We Need Diverse Books, and a faculty member in the Spalding University MFA program. He resides in Virginia with his wife.

Grace Worcester Greene has worked with literature for youth all her professional life, first as a children's librarian in Massachusetts, and then for twenty-seven years as the Youth Services Consultant at the Vermont Department of Libraries. In Vermont she oversaw the management of the state's three children's choice book awards. In addition, she has served on numerous book award committees, including the Caldecott, the Newbery, the Boston Globe-Horn Book and the Vermont Book Award.

Valerie Koehler opened Blue Willow Bookshop in west Houston in October 1996. She was named a Champion of Literacy from Literacy Advance of Houston, and MPIBA Bookseller of the Year in 2011. She has served on the boards of MidSouthIBA, MPIBA, ABC, and ABFFE. She is currently serving on the board of the American Booksellers Association. Valerie has a very patient husband and two sons successfully launched into the world.

Mitali Perkins has written several novels, including *You Bring the Distant Near*, *Rickshaw Girl*, *Bamboo People*, and *Tiger Boy*. She was honored as a "Most Engaging Author" by booksellers and a "Literary Light for Children" by the Boston Public Library. Mitali was born in India before immigrating to the United States. She also lived in Bangladesh, England, Thailand, Mexico, Cameroon, and Ghana, studied at Stanford and Berkeley, and resides in the San Francisco Bay Area.

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The mission of the **National Book Foundation** is to celebrate the best literature in America, expand its audience, and ensure that books have a prominent place in American culture. In addition to the **National Book Awards**, for which it is best known, the Foundation's programs include **5 Under 35**, a celebration of emerging fiction writers selected by former National Book Award Finalists and Winners; **NBF Presents**, which brings NBA authors to

2018 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS LONGLIST FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S LITERATURE

universities, libraries, festivals, and conferences across the country; **Literature for Justice**, a project that uses literature to contextualize and humanize the issue of mass incarceration in America; **Author in Focus**, a series comprised of panels, lectures, and film screenings designed to connect a broad audience with the works of seminal NBF-honored authors, beginning with James Baldwin in 2018; the **Innovations in Reading Prize**, awarded to individuals and institutions that have developed innovative means of creating and sustaining a lifelong love of reading; the **Why Reading Matters** conference, an opportunity for writers, activists, educators, librarians, and nonprofit leaders to explore innovative ways to celebrate literature and expand its influence; **Book Rich Environments**, a partnership with HUD, the US Department of Education, the Urban Libraries Council, and the National Center for Families Learning, which has provided nearly 700,000 books to children and families in public housing authorities around the country; the **Teen Press Conference**, an opportunity for students to interview the current National Book Award Finalists in Young People's Literature; **Raising Readers**, an adult-focused reading initiative to empower adults who work with and raise children to expand their own love of books and reading; and **BookUp**, a writer-led, after-school reading club for middle-school students.

The National Book Awards is one of the nation's most prestigious literary prizes and 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 in Fiction, and so on through the years. Many previous Winners of the National Book Award are now firmly established in the canon of American literature, including Ralph Ellison, Louise Erdrich, Jonathan Franzen, Denis Johnson, Flannery O'Connor, Adrienne Rich, and Jesmyn Ward.