



## Five distinctive writers shortlisted for *The Sunday Times* / Peters Fraser + Dunlop Young Writer of the Year Award 2017

Media Release | **Embargoed until 9.00am BST on Sunday, 29 October 2017**



Five of the UK and Ireland's best young writers have today been named on the shortlist for *The Sunday Times* / Peters Fraser + Dunlop Young Writer of the Year Award, now in association with the University of Warwick:

- ***Outlandish Knight – The Byzantine Life of Steven Runciman*** by Minoo Dinshaw (Allen Lane)
- ***The End of the Day*** by Claire North (Orbit)
- ***The Lucky Ones*** by Julianne Pachico (Faber & Faber)
- ***Conversations with Friends*** by Sally Rooney (Faber & Faber)
- ***The Lauras*** by Sara Taylor (Windmill)

The incomparable strength of this year's list of submissions led the jury to make a rare exception, and shortlist five, rather than the usual four authors for the prize – four women and one man. This year the prize is being judged by the award-winning novelist and political commentator **Elif Shafak** and the acclaimed cultural historian and biographer **Lucy Hughes-Hallett** alongside *The Sunday Times* literary editor Andrew Holgate.

*The Sunday Times* / Peters Fraser + Dunlop Young Writer of the Year Award, in association with the University of Warwick, rewards the best work of fiction, non-fiction or poetry by a British or Irish author aged between 18 and 35.

Featuring three novels, a collection of short stories and a biography, the shortlist showcases the extraordinary breadth of young British and Irish writing: **Minoo Dinshaw's** debut ***Outlandish Knight***

is the biography of a great and strange British historian; with the *The End of the Day*, Claire North has written a novel of life, death and everything in between; *The Lucky Ones*, Julianne Pachico's debut collection of stories, mostly set in Columbia, brings together the fates of guerrilla soldiers, rich kids, rabbits and drug dealers; *Conversations with Friends* by Irish writer Sally Rooney has written an intimate story of high-risk relationships, youth and love; and *The Lauras* by Sara Taylor, whose first novel was shortlisted for the award in 2015, explores identity and relationships, set against a rolling backdrop of the North American landscape.

**Elif Shafak said:** 'Our wonderful shortlist celebrates the depth and breadth of literature today, reflecting a striking diversity of styles, interests, genres and backgrounds. True, only one of these authors will win the prize in the end, but each of the five shortlisted books has already won our hearts, and we are confident that they will similarly win the hearts of readers worldwide.'

**Lucy Hughes-Hallett said:** 'These authors are young, but they are already accomplished writers with strong and distinctive voices and impressive literary talents. Each of the five shortlisted books is a treat to read, buzzing with invention and intellectual energy. It's great that we can help them find a public.'

**Andrew Holgate said:** 'The fact that the judges decided to nominate five instead of the usual four authors speaks volumes about the strength of this year's shortlist – diverse, adventurous, immensely mature and confident. The fact, too, that the voices we've picked come from such a range of backgrounds is a true endorsement of the confident, outward-looking nature of young British and Irish literature at the moment. We're going to have a very difficult task on our hands choosing a winner from such an exceptional shortlist.'

Since it began in 1991, the award has had a striking impact, boasting a stellar list of alumni that have gone on to become leading lights of contemporary literature. After a seven year break, it returned in 2015, awarding debut poet **Sarah Howe** the top prize for her phenomenal first collection, *Loop of Jade*, which then went on to win the T.S. Eliot Prize. Last year, **Max Porter** won for his experimental novel *Grief Is the Thing with Feathers*, which also took the Dylan Thomas Prize.

Generously sponsored by literary agency **Peters Fraser + Dunlop**, the award has garnered attention and acclaim across the publishing industry and media for identifying the best young writers at work in Britain and Ireland today, providing support that lays the foundation for successful literary careers, and connecting new writers with new audiences. £5,000 is given to the overall winner and £400 to each of the four runners-up.

For the second year running, the award will be chronicled by an official shadow judging panel made up of some of the country's leading book bloggers: Dane Cobain ([socialbookshelves.com](http://socialbookshelves.com)), Rebecca Foster ([bookishbeck.wordpress.com](http://bookishbeck.wordpress.com)), Elle Franzen ([ellethinks.wordpress.com/](http://ellethinks.wordpress.com/)), Annabel Gaskell ([shinynewbooks.co.uk](http://shinynewbooks.co.uk) / [gaskella.wordpress.com](http://gaskella.wordpress.com)), and Clare Rowland ([littleblogofbooks.com](http://littleblogofbooks.com)). The panel will announce their winner on 29 November.

From 2017, the award is running in association with the **University of Warwick**, who are offering a bespoke 10-week residency for the award's winner and a year-round programme of on-campus and digital support for award alumni and this year's shortlist. To celebrate the partnership, the university is holding a free one-day festival of events and workshops, bringing together inspirational thinkers, authors, journalists and performers: *freeflow* will take place on Wednesday, **29 November**. More information can be found at [warwick.ac.uk/youngwriter](http://warwick.ac.uk/youngwriter).

Shortlisted authors will appear at a public event at Waterstones Trafalgar Square, The Grand Building, Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 5EJ, on Tuesday, **28 November**.

The winner of *The Sunday Times* / Peters Fraser & Dunlop Young Writer of the Year Award 2017, in association with the University of Warwick, will be announced at a reception at the London Library on Thursday, **7 December**.

**Keep up to date with the award and join the conversation, via:**

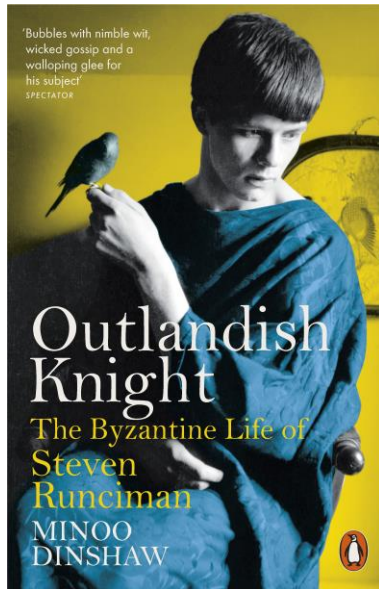
[youngwriteraward.com](http://youngwriteraward.com) | [twitter.com/youngwriteryear](https://twitter.com/youngwriteryear)

**ENDS**

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***Outlandish Knight – The Byzantine Life of Steven Runciman***

Minoo Dinshaw  
(Allen Lane)



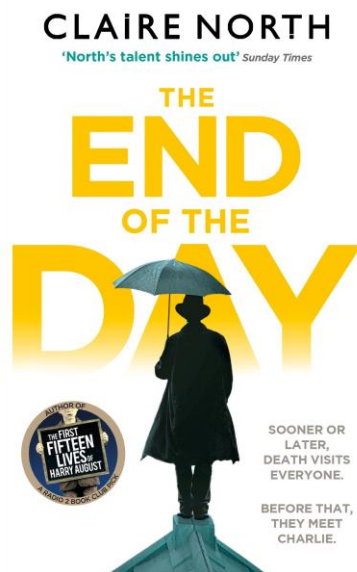
The biography of one of the greatest British historians - but also of a uniquely strange and various man. In his enormously long life, Steven Runciman managed not just to be a great historian of the Crusades and Byzantium, but Grand Orator of the Orthodox Church, a member of the Order of Whirling Dervishes, Greek Astronomer Royal and Laird of Eigg. His friendships, curiosities and intrigues entangled him in a huge array of different artistic movements, civil wars, Cold War betrayals and, above all, the rediscovery of the history of the Eastern Mediterranean. He was as happy living in a remote part of the Inner Hebrides as in the heart of Istanbul. *Outlandish Knight* is a dazzling debut by a writer who has prodigious gifts, but who also has had the ability to spot one of the great biographical subjects.

'As rich, funny and teeming with people as Anthony Powell's *A Dance to the Music of Time* ... Dinshaw writes with wit and elegance, and the most elegiac passages of *Outlandish Knight* evoke a lost society London and way of life.' Ben Judah, *Financial Times*

**Minoo Dinshaw** lives in London and *Outlandish Knight* is his first book.

***The End of the Day***

Claire North  
(Orbit)



Sooner or later, death visits everyone. Before that, they meet Charlie. Charlie meets everyone - but only once. Sometimes he is sent as a courtesy, sometimes as a warning. Either way, this is going to be the most important meeting of your life. *The End of the Day* is the stunning new story from Richard and Judy Book Club author Claire North, the voice behind the word-of-mouth bestseller *The First Fifteen Lives of Harry August*.

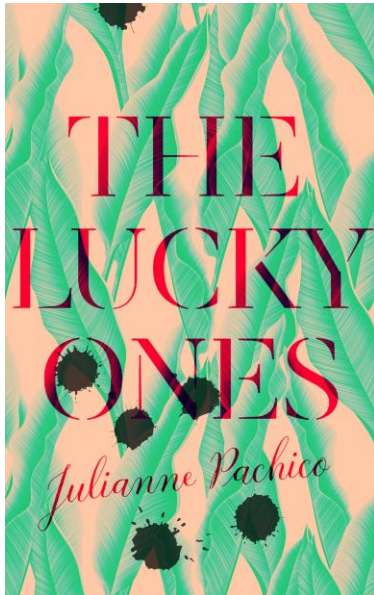
“Every one of the chapters is shaped with philosophical panache.” *Guardian*

**Claire North** is a pseudonym for Catherine Webb, a Carnegie Medal-nominated author whose debut novel was written when she was just fourteen years old. Her first book published as Claire North was *The First Fifteen Lives of Harry August*, which became a word-of-mouth bestseller. Her next novel *Touch* was described by the *Independent* as 'little short of a masterpiece' and established

Claire as one of the most exciting and imaginative young voices in modern fiction. Claire is also one of three writers contributing to the upcoming *Black Mirror* book, which ties into Charlie Brooker's award-winning TV series. She also works as a theatre lighting designer and lives in London.

***The Lucky Ones***

Julianne Pachico  
(Faber & Faber)



Set mostly in lush, heady Colombia but also in a jungle-like New York City, these short stories yoke together the fates of guerrilla soldiers, rich kids, rabbits, hostages, bourgeois expats, and drug dealers. Interconnected yet fractured, the result is a narrative jigsaw puzzle with some of the pieces missing. Her characters' voices are completely haunting and Pachico's playfulness with language and mastery of consciousness create a mesmerising collective atmosphere in this collection. At once terse and tender, with a manic, crazed energy, these stories will scalpel their way into your memory.

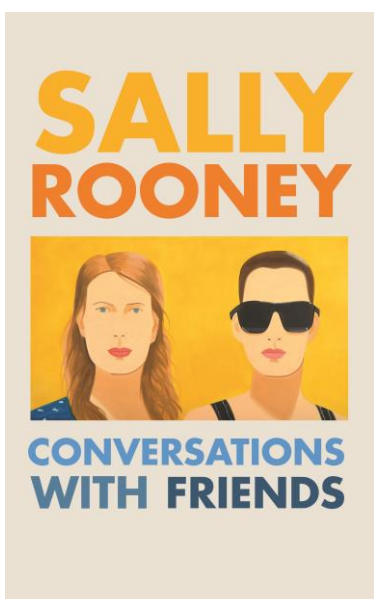
'Each of these stories enlivens and unsettles in its own way. Their cumulative power derives from the way they expose the fragility of any kind of security, and the interconnectedness of lives across gulfs of time and society. *The Lucky Ones* is a riveting collection.'

James Scudamore, author of *Wreaking and Heliopolis*

**Julianne Pachico** was born in 1985 in Cambridge, England. She grew up in Cali, Colombia, where her parents worked in international development as agricultural social scientists. She is currently completing her PhD in Creative and Critical Writing at UEA on a fully funded fellowship. She had a short story on the long list for the *Sunday Times Prize*, and is also the only writer to have two stories in the 2015 anthology of the *Best British Short Stories*. Her short stories have been published by *The New Yorker*, *Lighthouse*, *Litro*, *Shooter Magazine* and *Newwriting.net*, among others. She holds dual citizenship of the U.S. and the U.K.

***Conversations with Friends***

Sally Rooney  
(Faber & Faber)



Frances, Bobbi, Nick and Melissa ask each other endless questions. As their relationships unfold, in person and online, they discuss sex and friendship, art and literature, politics and gender, and, of course, one another. Twenty-one-year-old Frances is at the heart of it all, bringing us this tale of a complex *ménage-à-quatre* and her affair with Nick, an older married man. You can read *Conversations with Friends* as a romantic comedy, or you can read it as a feminist text. You can read it as a book about infidelity, about the pleasures and difficulties of intimacy, or about how our minds think about our bodies. However you choose to read it, it is an unforgettable novel about the possibility of love.

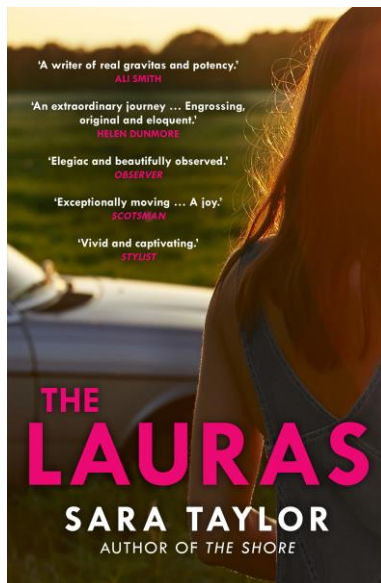
'Sally Rooney writes with a rare, thrilling confidence, in a lucid and exacting style uncluttered with the sort of steroidal imagery and strobe flashes of figurative language that so many dutifully literary novelists employ. This isn't to say that the novel lacks beauty.

Its richness blooms quietly.' *New Yorker*

**Sally Rooney** was born in 1991 in the West of Ireland, and lives in Dublin. She graduated from an MA at Trinity College and was ranked the number one competitive debater at the European Universities Debating Championships in 2013. Her work has appeared in *Granta*, *The White Review*, *The Dublin Review*, *The Stinging Fly*, Kevin Barry's *Stonecutter* and *The Winter Pages* anthology.

## ***The Lauras***

Sara Taylor  
(Windmill)



Alex and Ma have embarked on a life on the road. This enigmatic pilgrimage takes them back to various stages of Alex's mother's life, each new state prompting stories and secrets. Together they trace back through a life of struggle and adventure to put to rest unfinished business, to heal old wounds and to search out lost friends. This is an extraordinary story of a life; a stunning exploration of identity and an authentic study of the relationship between a mother and her child. *The Lauras* is the new novel from the exceptionally gifted author of *The Shore*, which was long listed for the Baileys Women's Fiction Prize and shortlisted for the *Guardian* First Book Award and *The Sunday Times* Young Writer of the Year.

'Taylor's writing is poetic and emotionally sensitive, describing a road trip that is the key to an entire life.' *The Times*

**Sara Taylor** was born and raised in rural Virginia. She has a BFA from Randolph College and an MA in Prose Fiction from the University of East Anglia. She is currently chipping away at a double-focus PhD in censorship and fiction at UEA. She spends her time between Norwich and Reading. *The Shore*, her debut novel, was shortlisted for the *Guardian* First Book Award and longlisted for the Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction. In 2015, Sara was shortlisted for the *Sunday Times*/PFD Young Writer of the Year Award.

### Notes to Editors

**About The Sunday Times / Peters Fraser + Dunlop Young Writer of the Year Award in association with the University of Warwick:**



Twenty-seven years old this year, the award recognises the best literary work of fiction, non-fiction or poetry by a British or Irish writer of 35 and under. £5,000 is given to the winner, and £500 to each of the three runners-up. The award was suspended in 2008, but now, in generous partnership with Peters Fraser + Dunlop, the award has been revitalised, while building on this remarkable past, offering two significant and exciting innovations: extending its reach by including writers from Ireland and including self-published works as well as those from publishers – putting

the prize in tune with the changing landscape of British publishing. From 2017, the award is running in association with the University of Warwick, who are offering a bespoke 10-week residency for the

award's winner, a free one-day festival of events and workshops, and a year-round programme of on-campus and digital support for award alumni and this year's shortlist

Past winners are: **Ross Raisin**, *God's Own Country* (2009); **Adam Foulds**, *The Truth About These Strange Times* (2008); **Naomi Alderman**, *Disobedience* (2007); **Robert Macfarlane**, *Mountains of the Mind: a History of a Fascination* (2004); **William Fiennes**, *The Snow Geese* (2003); **Zadie Smith**, *White Teeth* (2001); **Sarah Waters**, *Affinity* (2000); **Paul Farley**, *The Boy from the Chemist is Here to See You* (1999); **Patrick French**, *Liberty or Death: India's Journey to Independence and Division* (1998); **Francis Spufford**, *I May Be Some Time: Ice and the English Imagination* (1997); **Katherine Pierpoint**, *Truffle Beds* (1996); **Andrew Cowan**, *Pig* (1995); **William Dalrymple**, *City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi* (1994); **Simon Armitage**, *Kid* (1993); **Caryl Phillips**, *Cambridge* (1992); and **Helen Simpson**, *Four Bare Legs in a Bed and Other Stories* (1991).

#### About Peters Fraser + Dunlop:



Peters Fraser + Dunlop is one of the oldest and most established literary and talent agencies in London. We are proud to represent authors, journalists, broadcasters, speakers and estates with specialist expertise in the fields of literature, film, television and radio, public speaking, digital platforms and journalism. We offer our clients the best people to work with and the expertise to develop long-term value in their work across all media while protecting their rights in today's changing market. Our business is about creativity, enhancement, innovation and service.

#### About the University of Warwick:



The University of Warwick offers a bespoke 10-week winner residency, a festival of events, and a year-round programme of on-campus and digital support for alumni and the shortlist. The University of Warwick is consistently ranked in the top 10 universities in the UK and top 100 in the world, with the Warwick Writing Programme ranked No1 in the UK by The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2018. It is one of the UK's leading universities, with an acknowledged reputation for excellence in research, teaching and innovation alongside pioneering links with business and industry. It is home to the acclaimed Warwick Writing Programme, the largest and most comprehensive of its kind in Europe, which is currently home to renowned authors such as: Will Eaves, Maureen Freely, Michael Hulse, A.L. Kennedy, Tim Leach, David Morley, Sarah Moss, Ian Sansom, Jonathan Skinner, and David Vann.

#### About The Society of Authors:



The Society of Authors (SoA) administers *The Sunday Times / Peters, Fraser + Dunlop Young Writer of the Year Award*, in association with the University of Warwick. A professional organisation representing over 10,000 authors, The SoA was founded in 1884 and supports individual authors with services including contract vetting and acts as an advocate for the profession as a whole. The SoA also administers a wide range of prizes, as well as the Authors' Foundation, which is one of the very few bodies making grants to help with work in progress for established writers.

**About the Sunday Times:**

*The Sunday Times* is the UK's largest circulation quality Sunday newspaper with a circulation of 789,557. Over 413,600 people subscribe to the digital and/or print editions of *The Sunday Times* and *The Times*. Renowned for its technological innovation, *The Sunday Times* is available for download on all platforms and devices including Android, Amazon Kindle and iOS. *The Sunday Times* has a reputation for award-winning, courageous and campaigning investigative journalism, breaking many major world exclusives. With 8 sections every week, *The Sunday Times* offers great value to readers and it is recognised not only for breaking news but for its unrivalled coverage of sports, business, the arts and entertainment.