

THE BETTY TRASK PRIZE AND AWARDS SHORTLIST FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



15 May 2017

THE BETTY TRASK PRIZE AND AWARDS SHORTLIST 2017

The Society of Authors is delighted to announce the shortlist for the 2017 Betty Trask Prize and Awards. This year's shortlist is an impressive collection of first novels. The Betty Trask is given annually to a debut novel of literary merit by an author under the age of 35. The winner will receive £10,000 and will be announced at the Authors' Awards ceremony on 20 June. The other shortlisted authors will each receive a Betty Trask Award worth £3,000. The judges this year were, Simon Brett, Michèle Roberts, and Joanne Harris. The Prize and Awards will be presented by Ben Okri.

SHORTLIST AND JUDGE'S COMMENTS

The merchants of gloom keep declaring that the novel is dead but people do keep on writing them. The entries for this year's Betty Trask Prize formed a particularly rich and varied collection. The shortlist features pleasingly original approaches to novel-writing and is characterised by diversity of subject, tone and voice, by the authors' passion, intelligence and deep commitment to their art. – Michèle Roberts

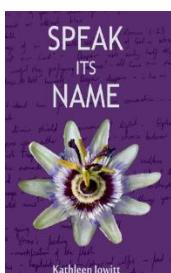


ROWAN HISAYO BUCHANAN HARMLESS LIKE YOU (Sceptre / Hodder & Stoughton)

The author writes with a painterly eye; every sentence is suffused with light and shade and colour. And yet it's a downplayed, subtle effect - no splashy, trying-too-hard, budget creative-writing class style, but the real thing, sparse and lovely and luminous.

ELNATHAN JOHN BORN ON A TUESDAY (Cassava Books Republic)

A tough, topical, directly-written book, devoid of sentimentality, and yet engaging, troubling and sad. The sense of place is wholly immersive, conjuring the villages and roads of troubled Nigeria with a deft and effortless touch.



KATHLEEN JOWITT SPEAK ITS NAME (self-published)

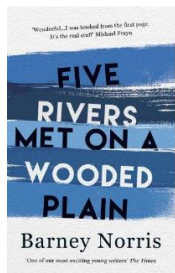
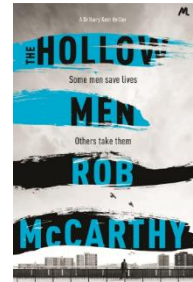
An original, closely-observed, funny and often touching story with an unusual setting and a keen understanding of the interactions between members of small communities.

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ROB MCCARTHY THE HOLLOW MEN (Mulholland Books / Hodder & Stoughton)

A tightly-written, confident thriller that manages to give the procedural an original medical twist. The author writes with a clear knowledge of his subject, and has created an engaging, interesting hero.

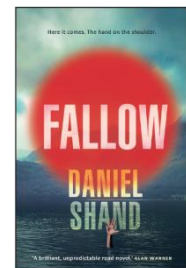


BARNEY NORRIS FIVE RIVERS MEET ON A WOODED PLAIN (Transworld)

A clever and compassionate book in which the lives of five very different characters eventually resonate with each other. A very skilfully controlled narrative told in a variety of voices.

DANIEL SHAND FALLOW (Sandstone Press Limited)

Bleak; funny; alarming; sad; it works on so many levels, managing to be at the same time a road trip through Scotland, a modern Biblical parable and a tense psychological thriller with echoes of Iain Banks and Cormac McCarthy.



NOTES TO EDITORS

The Betty Trask Awards are given annually to the best first novelists under the age of 35. Betty Trask left a bequest to the Society of Authors in 1983 to celebrate young authors writing in a traditional or romantic style. This year a total of £25,000 in prize money will be distributed.

For further information please contact Eleanor Jenyns on EJenyns@societyofauthors.org or Samia Gundkalli on SGundkalli@societyofauthors.org / 020 7373 6642.

For previous winners please see: <http://www.societyofauthors.org/Prizes/Fiction/Betty-Trask/Past-winners>