

2024 SOCIETY OF AUTHORS AWARDS
SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL



The **2024 Society of Authors' Awards** ceremony is the culmination of 12 months of planning, reading and judging. There are many people without whom it could not happen.

Thank you to our 47 judges for your many hours of reading and discussion to discover our winners and shortlistees. We really appreciate all your skill, enthusiasm, and knowledge.

Thank you to the SoA staff, in particular, the Communications, Events, Finance and Prizes teams, without whom the awards would not be possible. Finally, thank you to the SoA's Management Committee and their Chair, Vanessa Fox O'Loughlin, for their support and to Kate Mosse for her wonderful keynote speech.

2024 SOA AWARDS

The ADCI Literary Prize
The Gordon Bowker Volcano Prize
The Somerset Maugham Awards
The Travelling Scholarships
The ALCS Tom-Gallon Trust Award
The McKitterick Prize
The Queen's Knickers Award
The Cholmondeley Awards
The Eric Gregory Awards
The Betty Trask Prize
The Paul Torday Memorial Prize

PRESENTER

VANESSA FOX O'LOUGHLIN

Vanessa Fox O'Loughlin (Sam Blake) is a multiple No 1 bestselling crime writer. Her 10th thriller, *Three Little Birds*, and her 2023 YA debut, *Something Terrible Happened Last Night*, are both in shops now. Sam is the founder of Ireland's International Crime Writing Festival, Murder One. She is the Chair of the Society of Authors Management Committee and a board member of the Crime Writers Association.



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KEYNOTE SPEECH

KATE MOSSE

Kate Mosse CBE is a bestselling novelist, non-fiction author and playwright who has sold more than 10 million books in more than 40 languages. She is also a performer – her one-woman theatre show based on *Warrior Queens & Quiet Revolutionaries* toured the UK in 2023 and she is currently touring *Women Who Resisted*, a celebration of the forgotten women of World War II. A visiting Professor of Contemporary Fiction & Creative Writing at the University of Chichester, Kate is an Honorary Fellow of the SoA and a Trustee of the British Library.



© Ruth Crafer

The ADCI (Authors with Disabilities and Chronic Illnesses) Literary Prize is awarded for a novel by a disabled or chronically ill author, featuring a disabled or chronically ill character. Generously supported by the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS), Arts Council England, the Drusilla Harvey Memorial Fund, and the Professional Writing Academy.



The winner is awarded £1,250 and the runner-up £750.

Judges: Nii Ayikwei Parkes, Penny Batchelor, Rowan Hisayo Buchanan, Karl Knights, Julia Lund, Selina Mills, Vikki Patis and Chloe Timms.

'The two books we have chosen to celebrate are not only works of fine, restrained prose, they are haunting, they are books of remarkable ambition, they are books that will stay with their readers.'

– Nii Ayikwei Parkes

PROFESSIONAL
WRITING
ACADEMY

ALCS



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

2024 RUNNER-UP

VIKTORIA LLOYD-BARLOW

All the Little Bird Hearts (Tinder Press, Headline)

Viktoria Lloyd-Barlow has a PhD in Creative Writing from the University of Kent, and has extensive personal, professional, and academic experience relating to autism. Like her protagonist in *All the Little Bird Hearts*, Viktoria is autistic. She has presented her doctoral research internationally, most recently speaking at Harvard University on autism and literary narrative. Viktoria lives with her husband and children on the coast of north-east Kent. *All the Little Bird Hearts* was longlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction and shortlisted for the Authors' Club Best First Novel Award.



'With lyrical prose and beautiful imagery, this book explores the dark side of familial and neighbourly relationships from the perspective of its neurodivergent narrator, Sunday Forrester. The writer is adept at painfully revealing, through Sunday's eyes, the 'little bird hearts' of those in society who mask their true intentions; she has produced an eloquent, memorable story and portrayal of her autistic protagonist.'

– Penny Batchelor

2024 WINNER

LORRAINE WILSON

Mother Sea (Fairlight Books)

Lorraine Wilson is an ex-conservation scientist who writes fiction influenced by folklore and the wilderness. With a third-culture heritage, she is drawn to themes of family, belonging and the legacy of trauma. Her debut novel *This Is Our Undoing* was shortlisted for the Kavya Prize and the British Fantasy Society's Best Newcomer and Best Fantasy Novel awards. Her upcoming novel *We Are All Ghosts in the Forest* is publishing in November 2024.



'Mother Sea is a wonderfully realised, quietly political novel that speaks to some of the most urgent issues of our time – our rampant commercialism, our disregard of ancient wisdoms and the sinister machinations of colonial powers. That none of these things is overt, and the story is one of atmospheric allure and enduring human connection is testament to the author's skill. We leave Brother Island at the end, but it never leaves us.'
– Nii Ayikwei Parkes

For a novel focusing on the experience of travel away from home. In memory of Malcolm Lowry and endowed by Gordon Bowker, his biographer, and Ramdei Bowker.



The winner is awarded £2,000 and the runner-up £750.

Judges: Aamer Hussein, Yara Rodrigues Fowler and Kerry Young

2024 Shortlist

Santanu Bhattacharya for *One Small Voice* (Fig Tree, Penguin Random House UK)

Soula Emmanuel for *Wild Geese* (Footnote Press)

Isabella Hammad for *Enter Ghost* (Vintage, Jonathan Cape)

Cecile Pin for *Wandering Souls* (4th Estate, Harper Collins)

'This year's shortlist is a treasure trove of wondrous storytelling from four writers who know that the personal is the political. These books should be cherished for their social and political insights as well as for the splendour of their prose.'

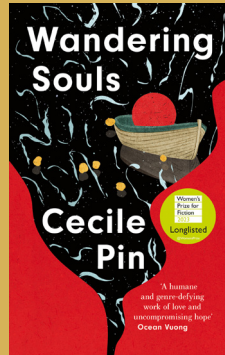
– Kerry Young

2024 RUNNER-UP

CECILE PIN

Wandering Souls (4th Estate, Harper Collins)

Cecile Pin grew up in Paris and New York City, and is now based in London. Her debut novel *Wandering Souls* was longlisted for the Women's Prize for fiction, the Prix Femina Etranger, and shortlisted for the Waterstones Debut Fiction Prize.



'Cecile Pin's harrowing though intricately structured first novel about siblings trying to make new lives in England frames a profound exploration of loss, dispossession, mourning, and a final coming to terms with the past's painful legacy.'

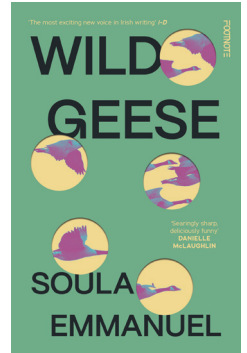
– Aamer Hussein

2024 WINNER

SOULA EMMANUEL

Wild Geese (Footnote Press)

Soula Emmanuel is a trans writer who was born in Dublin to an Irish mother and a Greek father. She attended university in Ireland and Sweden, graduating with a Master's in Demography which she likes to think inspired her interest in society's outliers. She was longlisted for Penguin's WriteNow programme in 2020, took part in the Stinging Fly fiction summer school in 2021 and was a participant in the Madeleine Milburn Literary Agency's mentorship programme for 2021-22. She currently lives on Ireland's east coast.



'Wild Geese starts when Phoebe, a trans Irish woman living in Denmark receives a surprise visit from her ex. Every sentence is a joy. Emmanuel's prose is second to none – playful, erudite and completely unexpected. Wild Geese makes a powerful, moving case for the pursuit of newness in the world and in life. Not only does Emmanuel convincingly transport the reader to Copenhagen, she reveals to us the possibility at the heart of travel to a new place: that it might show us a different way of living.'

– Yara Rodrigues Fowler

W. Somerset Maugham set up a fund in 1947 to enable young writers to enrich their work by gaining experience of foreign countries. The awards are given for a published work of fiction, non-fiction or poetry.

The winners are awarded £3,200 each.

Judges: Akeem Balogun, Bhanu Kapil and Ardashir Vakil

'Reading and judging for the Somerset Maugham Awards is exciting and revelatory, a wonderful display of young talent in all the genres. Fantastic depth and breadth in terms of language and subject matter. Heartening to read important stories, both past and present, from across the globe, representing the experiences of our many different individuals and communities.'

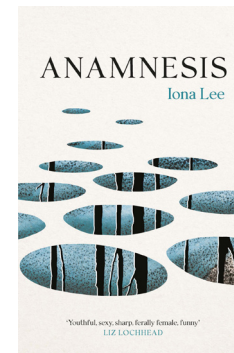
– Ardashir Vakil

2024 WINNER

IONA LEE

Anamnesis (Polygon, Birlinn)

Iona Lee is a writer, artist, music-maker, storyteller and spoken-word performer from Edinburgh. She has been a prominent member of Scotland's live poetry scene for the past ten years, appearing on radio and television and reading her work in venues and on festival stages all over the UK and Europe. In 2022, Iona won the John Byrne award for her poetry film, *Away with the Fairies* – a retelling of the Tam Lin ballad – and she appeared on *Young Woman Scotland's* 30 Under 30 list. Her debut poetry collection, *Anamnesis*, was shortlisted for the Edwin Morgan Poetry Award, and appeared on *SNACK Magazine's* list of the top ten books to be published in Scotland in 2023.



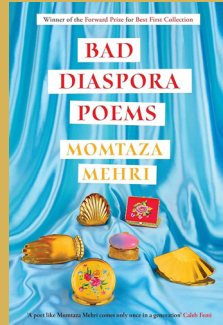
'Iona Lee's poems are moving, lyrical and lucid. Anamnesis gives us writing that implies faith in the future through the lens of memory. The images Lee culls from the past show us that what we remember is who we are. But the poems also reenact through sounds, structure and imagery, playful, spontaneous, visions of past lives. There is both a sadness and a joy in the reading of these memorable, vivid verses.'

– Ardashir Vakil

2024 WINNER MOMTAZA MEHRI

Bad Diaspora Poems (Jonathan Cape, Vintage)

Momtaza Mehri is a poet and researcher working across criticism, education, and radio. She is a former Young People's Poet Laureate for London. She has completed residencies at St. Paul's Cathedral and the British Library, and is now the new Poet in Residence at Homerton College. Her debut poetry collection *Bad Diaspora Poems* recently won the 2023 Forward Prize for Best First Collection, as well as an Eric Gregory Award.



'Momtaza Mehri's debut collection works lightly and fiercely across registers, tones and possibilities. Some poems circulated in our nervous systems: tiny shocks, a light touch or glitch. Some poems were questions we returned with, to the place beyond the book's intended scope. Some poems surprised us. Some poems prompted memories of our own homes and verges, a quality that we spoke of with deep appreciation.'

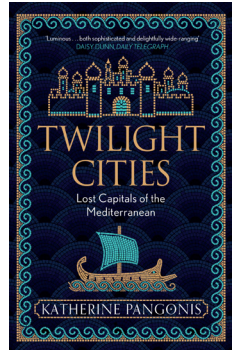
– Bhanu Kapil

2024 WINNER KATHERINE PANGONIS

Twilight Cities: Lost Capitals of the Mediterranean

(Weidenfeld & Nicolson, Orion)

Katherine Pangonis is a writer and historian specialising in the Mediterranean and Middle East. She is the author of two books, *Queens of Jerusalem* and *Twilight Cities*, and has two more in the works. Katherine has a particular interest in amplifying the voices of women and minorities, and re-examining understudied areas of history and bringing her findings into the public eye. Her journalism has appeared in *The Economist*, *The Times*, *The Fuller Project*, *BBC History* and *British Vogue*. Travel is central to her research process, and that is how she spends most of her time.



'Katharine Pangonis creates a compelling and vivid picture of five cities. What is captivating about her depictions is that she combines historical research and scholarship with her contemporary journeys through these cities and the ruins left behind. Pangonis unearths moving portraits of people and monuments. Forgotten communities, fascinating relics and half-ruined sites in need of representation. This is a complex tapestry of history, geography and politics written with admirable clarity. It made me want to pack my bag and follow in her footsteps.'

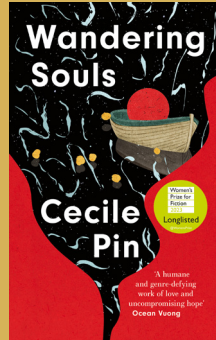
– Ardashir Vakil

2024 WINNER

CECILE PIN

Wandering Souls (4th Estate, Harper Collins)

Cecile Pin grew up in Paris and New York City, and is now based in London. Her debut novel *Wandering Souls* was longlisted for the Women's Prize for fiction, the Prix Femina Etranger, and shortlisted for the Waterstones Debut Fiction Prize.



'Wandering Souls resonated as a work of psychological and geographical assemblage. How do we form narratives from the detritus of other people's stories, both lived and un-lived? Cecile Pin offers us a novel in the form of a speculative archive, a history of migration that interacts in unexpected ways with the present in which it is being read.'
- Bhanu Kapil

2024 WINNER

PHOENICIA ROGERSON

Herc (HQ, Harper Collins)

Phoenicia Rogerson is altogether mortal with a rather less checkered past than Hercules. After a decade of not being able to find his complete story on bookshelves, she decided to pull her socks up and write it herself. She's had two short stories published in the UCL Publisher's Prize. She lives and works in London. *Herc* is her first novel.



'Herc is a book that satisfies the reader's love for entertainment through a fresh and original take on the mythology and icons surrounding Hercules. Rogerson has a talent and passion for storytelling, and this debut novel is a brilliant example of fiction's magic and ability to give us great stories in a way no other medium can.'
- Akeem Balogun

The Travelling Scholarships were established to enable British creative writers to keep in touch with their colleagues abroad.

The winners are awarded £5,800.

Judges: Emily Barr, Gabriel Gbadamosi, Louise Jury, Alvin Pang and Philip Terry

'Travel can be transformative to the work of writers. It is wonderful to award these scholarships to support people working across a range of genres to explore, research and seek inspiration.'

– Louise Jury

2024 WINNER

KATYA BALEN

Katya Balen is a children's writer from London. She writes mostly about nature, birds, home, and hope. Her second novel, *October*, won the Carnegie Medal and the UKLA award, and was highly commended for the James Copper Wainwright Nature Writing Prize. She lives with her partner and their whippet, Mouse.



'Balen's writing is technically astounding, it's the humanity and the exploration of childhood that makes her writing stay with you long after you've finished the book. She writes about wilderness, freedom, happiness, and above all the importance of stories to help us make sense of the world around us and our place in it. Her words make sense of the impossible and show children who feel like outsiders that they're not alone. I love immersing myself in her worlds, and I'm very excited to see where she will go next.'

– Emily Barr

2024 WINNER JAMES BYRNE

James Byrne is a poet, editor, translator and visual artist. His most recent poetry collections are *Places you Leave* and *Of Breaking Glass*. Byrne has worked with Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar and has given readings in places such as Libya and Syria. *The Overmind* and his *Selected Poems, Nightsongs for Gaia* are forthcoming.



© Carolyn Forche

'Poet, editor and translator James Byrne has been labouring tirelessly to connect British letters with significant literary conversations and communities around the world, including in Syria and Myanmar. It is wonderful to be able to recognise his work with a Travelling Scholarship that should facilitate more of his international work as well as his own innovative writing practice.'

– Alvin Pang

2024 WINNER LIZ HOGGARD

Liz Hoggard is a journalist, author and interviewer, covering books, theatre, film, design and travel. She has written for *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Times*, *Evening Standard*, *Observer*, *Radio Times*, *The Stage*, *You Magazine*, and *Selvedge*. Her books include *Making Slough Happy* and *Dangerous Women: The Guide to Modern Life*. She was nominated for the 2018 British Journalism Awards – Arts and Entertainment Journalism. In 2023, she was a judge for the Comedy Women In Print Prize.



© Juliet Murphy

'Liz Hoggard has had a long career writing with passion and intelligence across a wide range of the arts, but there is increasing budgetary pressure at publications that historically covered culture. We hope that this award will create opportunities for Hoggard to find people and subjects of interest where the expense of travel might otherwise be an impediment – and that it will be a vindication of all the writers who want to do more challenging work.'

– Louise Jury

2024 WINNER

PETER KALU

Peter Kalu writes short stories in styles ranging from the realist to the surreal to the carnivalesque. They can be found in anthologies including *Glimpse & Closure* (Peepal Tree 2024, 2023, 2015), *Seaside Special* (Bluemoose 2018) and *Want me want me want me* (Lancashire Libraries 2022). His novel, *One Drop*, was published in 2022 by Andersen Press. Until recently, he ran a carnival band, The Moko Jumbies.



© Fereshteh
Mozaffari

'Artistic director of Commonword literature development agency, Peter Kalu's own writing output across genres now turns to his Danish and West African parentage with research into the Danish-built Christiansborg Castle on the coast of Ghana. Awards in film, theatre and comedy recognise the breadth of his work, which is impressively experimental, thoughtful, and challenging.'

- **Gabriel Gbadamosi**

2024 WINNER

HANNAH LOWE

Hannah Lowe is a poet, memoirist and academic. Her latest book, *The Kids*, won the Costa Poetry Award and the Costa Book of the Year, 2021. Her first poetry collection *Chick* (Bloodaxe, 2013) won the Michael Murphy Memorial Award for Best First Collection. In September 2014, she was named as one of 20 Next Generation poets. Her family memoir *Long Time, No See* (Periscope, 2015) featured as Radio 4's Book of the Week. She is a Reader in Creative Writing at Brunel University.



© Lealle Brady

'Winner of the Costa Prize for Poetry and shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize, Hannah Lowe is embarking on Amoy: In Search of Nelsa Lowe, a memoir of her Chinese/Jamaican aunt who ran a famous brothel in Kingston, Jamaica in the 1950s. Hannah's work is beautifully crafted, deeply moving and always thoughtful and wise in its judgment.'

- **Gabriel Gbadamosi**

2024 WINNER ZOË SKOULDING

Zoë Skoulding's sixth and most recent collection of poems is *A Marginal Sea*, following *Footnotes to Water* and *A Revolutionary Calendar*. She is co-editor, with Katherine Hedeem, of *Poetry's Geographies: A Transatlantic Anthology of Translations*, and her critical publications have explored poetry's relationships with place, listening, translation and ecology. She is Professor of Poetry and Creative Writing at Bangor University, and lives on Ynys Môn / Anglesey.

'We loved the situated experimentalism of A Marginal Sea. This is poetry that twists form and language into new shapes and alters our way of seeing as it does so. Taking us from the Menai Strait to Apollinaire's Paris to toucans in Tortuguero, Skoulding reveals with a sense of shared wonder how the self only exists in the networks of intimacy and interconnectedness it establishes with the world around it, in languages, places, birds, people and buds.'

– Philip Terry



© John
Hollingsworth

Founded by Nellie Tom-Gallon in memory of her brother and now generously funded by the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS) and Hawthornden Foundation. For a short story of up to 5,000 words.

The winner is awarded £2,000, the runner-up £1,000 and each shortlisted author receives £500.

Judges: Brian Chikwava, Yan Ge, Sophie Haydock and Peter Hobbs

2024 Shortlist

Hussani Abdulrahim for 'Arewa Boys'
Trahearne Falvey for 'The Staring Contest'
Edward Hogan for 'Little Green Man'
Naomi Wood for 'A/A/A/A/'
Alexandra Ye for 'This Story'

'I think we're all immensely proud of the range and quality of our shortlist. It was a long and hard-fought process working our way down to these five outstanding examples of the form, which showcase the ways the short story can distil and contain whole lives and worlds.'

– Peter Hobbs



2024 RUNNER-UP EDWARD HOGAN

‘Little Green Man’

Edward Hogan’s most recent novel is *The Electric*, published by John Murray, and his previous books include *Blackmoor*, which won the Desmond Elliott Prize. His short stories have placed in the Manchester Fiction Prize and the *Sunday Times* Short Story Award. He won the *Galley Beggar Press* Short Story Prize in 2021.

‘The runner-up, ‘Little Green Man’, with its stark realism, is a superb story that, for me, stood out right from the start. Striking and driven by a distinctive narrative zing, it’s one of the stories I most enjoyed reading.’

– Brian Chikwava

Carrie had no interest in shirtless young men, but his white socks made her feel tender towards him. The Sports Directness of them. The cotton so soft and hopeful. They were already tainted green by this work.

From ‘Little Green Man’
© Edward Hogan

2024 WINNER ALEXANDRA YE

‘This Story’

Alexandra Ye is an American writer living in Edinburgh, where she studied for a MSc in Creative Writing. Her short stories have been published in *Gutter Magazine*, *The Offing* and *Extra Teeth*.

‘A deceptively simple story that carries a multitude of narratives. Brimming with acuity and humour, in luminous and succinct prose, ‘This Story’ poses questions on family, motherhood, immigration and memories while proposing, with delight and profundity, fictionalisation as the only way of comprehending reality.’

– Yan Ge

This story would have been different if my father had loved drinking, or gambling, or religion, or women. In fact, it is possible that no story would have existed.

From ‘This Story’
© Alexandra Ye

Founded by Tom McKitterick and sponsored by Hawthornden Foundation. Open to debut novels by writers aged 40 years and over.

The winner will receive £4,000, the runner-up £2,000 and each shortlisted author is awarded £1,000.

Judges: Rebecca Foster, Gonzalo C. Garcia, Kelleigh Greenberg-Jephcott, Rónán Hession and Anietie Isong.



2024 Shortlist

Jacqueline Crooks for *Fire Rush* (Vintage, Jonathan Cape)

Chidi Ebere for *Now I Am Here* (Picador, Pan Macmillan)

Aoife Fitzpatrick for *The Red Bird Sings* (Virago)

Greg Jackson for *The Dimensions of a Cave* (Granta)

Wenyan Lu for *The Funeral Cryer* (Allen & Unwin, Atlantic Books)

Allan Radcliffe for *The Old Haunts* (Fairlight Books)

'It is exciting to encounter such a depth of talent. Though hugely varied in subject matter and style, the writers on the shortlist all impressed me with the clarity of their creative vision and their narrative authority on the page.'

– Rónán Hession

2024 RUNNER-UP

CHIDI EBERE

Now I am Here (Picador, Pan Macmillan)

Chidi Ebere was born and raised in Oxford and spent part of his childhood in Nigeria before returning to the UK. His short stories have appeared in *UK Cosmopolitan*, *Ambit* and *West 8*. He has also written on architecture and urbanism for *Archis*, *Harvard Design Magazine*, *the Journal of Architecture* and others. He now lives in Amsterdam. *Now I Am Here* is his first novel.



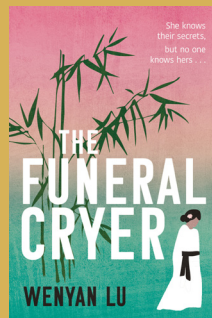
'This fictional story, in which the uniform embodies absolute power, is reminiscent of the tactics adopted by authoritarian regimes across the world. Indeed, Chidi Ebere vividly depicts how military dictatorship often subjects civilians and soldiers to intense physical and psychological trauma. Now I am Here is a compelling novel that reveals the epic failure of humanity.'

– Anietie Isong

2024 WINNER WENYAN LU

The Funeral Cryer (Allen & Unwin, Atlantic Books)

Wenyan Lu is a novelist from Shanghai, China, represented by Kemi Ogunsanwo. She is also a literary translator, and teaches Creative Writing. Her novel *The Funeral Cryer* won the SI Leeds Literary Award before publication in the UK, North America and Italy. *The Funeral Cryer* was Books Are My Bag's Fiction of the Month and one of Kobo's Best Fiction of the Month for May 2023. Wenyan is currently working on the submission of her second novel. She lives with her husband and two children in Cambridge.



'Wenyan Lu has created an unforgettable debut, brimming with personality and written with a sense of consummate ease. The Funeral Cryer is such a funny, warm and original book. An absolute gem of a novel.'

– Rónán Hession

Founded and sponsored by Nicholas Allan and awarded to an outstanding children's original illustrated book for ages 0-7.

The winning author and illustrator will share £5,000, and the runners-up £1,000.

Judges: Cerrie Burnell, Salomey Doku and Chris Haughton



2024 Shortlist

Coralie Bickford-Smith for *The Squirrel and the Lost Treasure* (Particular Books, Penguin Random House UK)
Rachel Bright and **Jim Field** for *The Gecko and the Echo* (Orchard Books, Hachette Children's Group)
Gabby Dawnay and **Mona K** for *5 Minute Nature Stories* (Magic Cat Publishing)

Julia Kuo for *Luminous* (Greystone Kids)
Yoko Mori for *Teddy's Midnight Adventure* (Pushkin Press)
Rafael Yockteng and **Jairo Buitrago** for *Afterward, Everything Was Different* (Aldana Libros, Greystone Kids)
Benjamin Zephaniah and **Nila Aye** for *People Need People* (Orchard Books, Hachette Children's Group)

'The books that made it onto the Queen's Knickers shortlist all had a distinct appeal to us as judges in one way or another. Each and every book earned its place on the list.'

– Salomey Doku

2024 RUNNER-UP

YOKO MORI

Teddy's Midnight Adventure (Pushkin Press)

Yoko Mori was born in Tokyo in 1959 and is a painter, author and illustrator. She specialises in pencil drawings of nostalgic scenes of Tokyo life in the 1960s of her childhood. *Teddy's Midnight Adventure* is the first of her books to be published in English.



'I loved Teddy's Midnight Adventure so much, I cheered when we picked it for the runner-up. It's so striking, strange and astonishingly mesmerizing, the story, characters and illustrations are utterly unforgettable and completely wondrous. It's a world I would love to visit.'

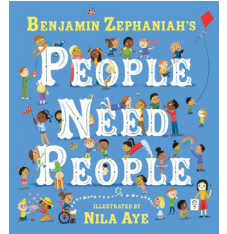
– Cerrie Burnell

2024 WINNER

BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH AND NILA AYE

People Need People (Orchard Books, Hachette)

Benjamin Zephaniah was a performer, musician, actor, and one of the UK's best-known poets. Benjamin was a founding member of Artists Against Apartheid, and in 1996 he hosted the President's Two Nations Concerts, at the request of Nelson Mandela. Benjamin was the first person to record with the Wailers after the death of Bob Marley. His poetry show *Life & Rhymes* won a BAFTA for 'best entertainment programme.' He was awarded 13 honorary doctorates in recognition of his work and a wing at The Ealing Hospital was named after him.



Nila Aye was born in Myanmar, arriving in the UK aged three and spent most of her childhood dreaming and drawing pictures. Nila is an award winning illustrator, collaborating on many well-loved children's books.

'I'm very proud of our winner. People Need People has such a powerful message that is told in such a simple and clear way. The text is so strong. The detailed illustrations ask us to linger on each page and look at all the details. In this way it can be read by even very young children who will enjoy spotting the different characters pointing out all the details. A powerful message that deserves to be a classic.'

– Chris Haughton

The Cholmondeley Awards were founded by the late Dowager Marchioness of Cholmondeley to recognise the achievement and distinction of individual poets.

The 2024 winners are awarded £1,400 each.

Judges: Moniza Alvi, Malika Booker, Hannah Lowe and Lachlan Mackinnon

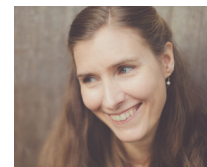
'It has been a unique pleasure, as well as a privilege, to be a judge of the Cholmondeley Awards and to once again celebrate diverse, outstanding contributions to poetry in an ever-expanding poetry world.'

– Moniza Alvi

2024 WINNER

FIONA BENSON

Fiona Benson received an Eric Gregory Award from the Society of Authors in 2006. Her collections are *Bright Travellers*, *Vertigo & Ghost*, and *Ephemeron*, all published by Jonathan Cape. Her recent work includes a poetry script for Wim Vandekeybus' 'Infamous Offspring,' which is currently in performance with his company Ultima Vez in Europe, and a fourth poetry book *Midden Witch*.



© Jessica Farmer
of Perspectives
Photography

'Fiona Benson's writing, thematically engaged with love, gender, motherhood and the natural world, is often underpinned by research, and the use of allegory and myth. Across her body of work, Benson showcases an even keen eye of observation, from the short lyric poems about insects to poems that make surprising links between animal and human behaviour. In longer narrative poems about girlhood and motherhood, there is often a fluttering, questioning tone, challenging the saccharine tropes of mothering in poems that ask questions about how to keep children safe.'

– Hannah Lowe

2024 WINNER

GERRY CAMBRIDGE

Gerry Cambridge's six books of poetry include *Notes for Lighting a Fire* and *The Light Acknowledgers*. He founded *The Dark Horse*, Scotland's leading poetry journal, in 1995. He is also an essayist, print designer, typographer, and former nature photographer. An Ayrshire caravan-dweller for twenty years, he became Brownsbank Fellow in MacDiarmid's former home for 1997-1999. A prose memoir, *The Ayrshire Nestling*, is forthcoming from Red Squirrel Press.



© Alex Boyd

'Gerry Cambridge's publications have often been fugitive, in limited or private editions. His poems are carefully wrought, often developing from a seemingly unpromising beginning to a startling and powerful conclusion. He has also written powerfully about wildlife, particularly birds, with the attention to truth we expect from a former wildlife photographer and the same accuracy about emotions. His Scotland has a history, more one of toil than of politics. His creation and editorship of The Dark Horse has given us one of the very best current poetry periodicals.'

– Lachlan Mackinnon

2024 WINNER

JULIA COPUS

Julia Copus has published five collections of poetry, the latest of which, *Girlhood*, was winner of America's inaugural Derek Walcott Prize for best collection by a non-US citizen. Other awards include the Forward Prize for 'Best Single Poem' and First Prize in the National Poetry Competition. She has mentored and tutored in poetry and is currently Royal Literary Fund Fellow at the V&A Museum in South Kensington.



© Caroline Forbes

'Julia Copus's four collections, most recently Girlhood, show steady and increasing mastery. Her voice, clear, unillusioned, lucid, can include, control and make new subjects as difficult as male violence, especially to children, and as familiar as falling in love. She has invented a new form, the specular, where the poem is rewritten backwards line by line and repunctuated to conjure new meanings. Her biography of Charlotte Mew explored and filled a considerable gap in our knowledge.'

– Lachlan Mackinnon

2024 WINNER LEONTIA FLYNN

Leontia Flynn's fifth collection of poetry, *Taking Liberties*, was published with Jonathan Cape in 2023. Her previous collections have won the Forward prize for best First Collection, the Rooney Prize for Irish Literature, the Lawrence O'Shaughnessy award for Irish poetry, the *Irish Times* Poetry Prize, and twice been shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot prize. She was made a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in 2022 and is a Professor at the Seamus Heaney Centre, Queen's University, Belfast.



© Steve Martin

'With directness, as well as intricacy, Leontia Flynn brings a distinctly contemporary flavour to formal poetry. Her poems are astute, wry, tender and very human. She refreshes our vision of the quotidian and beyond, savouring a wealth of experience and penetrating beneath the surface. A haunting, versatile, often virtuosic poet for our times.'

– Moniza Alvi

2024 WINNER HELEN IVORY

Helen Ivory is a poet and visual artist who makes shadowboxes. She won an Eric Gregory Award in 1999. She has published five collections with Bloodaxe Books – the sixth *Constructing a Witch*, is forthcoming. She has work translated into Ukrainian, Polish, Spanish, Croatian and Greek for *Versopolis*. A poem from chapbook *Maps of the Abandoned City*, is a recent Poem on the Underground. She edits the webzine *Ink Sweat and Tears* and teaches online for the NCW Academy. She lives in Norwich.



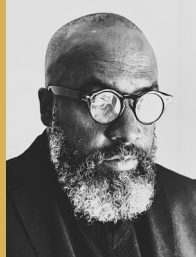
© Martin Figura

'A highly individualistic poet and visual artist, conjures a world that is both magical and sharply real. As in freshly conceived fairy tales, everything is transmutable. She expresses the intrinsic strangeness of life, and makes a brilliant contribution to female empowerment through poems that are disturbing, agile, and visually telling.'

– Moniza Alvi

2024 WINNER ROGER ROBINSON

Roger Robinson is a writer who has performed worldwide, an experienced workshop leader and winner of the T.S. Eliot Prize 2019 and RSL Ondaatje Prize 2020. Chosen by Decibel as one of 50 writers who have influenced the Black-British writing canon. His latest collection *A Portable Paradise* was a *New Statesman* book of the year. His poem 'A Portable Paradise' appears in the GCSE English Literature syllabus.



'Roger Robinson's work as a teacher and educator is key to his practice and his workshops have been recognised by various organisations, including the Gulbenkian Museum Prize. Robinson's work is deeply imagistic and metaphorical, often concerned with migration and arrival, and the challenges of settlement in a hostile country. Astute, musical and formally inventive, Robinson's work demonstrates a revolutionary poetics of community and resistance.'
– Hannah Lowe

The Eric Gregory Awards, for a collection by poets under the age of 30, were founded by the late Dr Eric Gregory for the encouragement of young poets.

The winners are awarded £4,725 each and are invited to a solo week residency at Thomas Cottage generously offered by the owners.

Judges: Raymond Antrobus, Caroline Bird, Wayne Holloway-Smith, Gwyneth Lewis, Eric Ngalle Charles and Joelle Taylor.

'Being an Eric Gregory Award judge is a weighty but joyful task. I know from experience that being given one is a life-changing experience. I feel the responsibility to identify work of promise that isn't just like my own. In fact, the younger writers are teaching me about how to write now so, as well as being a huge pleasure, the reading is an education.'
– Gwyneth Lewis

2024 WINNER WILL BARNARD

Tequila Sunrise

Will Barnard is a poet and writer from Cheshire with an MA in Creative Writing from Manchester Metropolitan University.

'Will Barnard's sensibility is unique, and the poet describes the squalour of heavy drinking with such vividness that it becomes philosophical exploration. This poet notices things that the rest of us don't and has the technical abilities to land a mighty sequence of poems.'

– Gwyneth Lewis

I curled up on the dirty floor in the foetal position
before walking onto the bar
and breaking down a speed-rail by the vodka.

From *Tequila Sunrise*
© Will Barnard

2024 WINNER MAIA ELSNER

The Quiet Before

Maia Elsner's debut poetry collection *Overrun by Wild Boars* won a Somerset Maugham Award and was listed as one of the best books of 2021 by *The Telegraph*. Her debut non-fiction book, *Dante Elsner*, recounts the life story of her paternal grandfather. Her writing has won the John S Wagner Prize and the Hopwood Award for non-fiction.

'Maia Elsner has conceived an innovative structure for this account of love and war, forcing us to read the manuscript in a different order each time. The book makes you act out the rhymes and repetitions of history, in a quantum structure, showing us how one war echoes another.'

– Gwyneth Lewis

here
is a bulldozer
was a synagogue
was a butcher's shop

was a lung
of evergreens holding on
to one another

From *The Quiet Before*
© Maia Elsner

2024 WINNER
WILLIAM GEE*again again*

William Gee is the author of *Rheuma* (Bad Betty Press, 2020) and *Trust Fall* (Out-Spoken Press, 2023). His work has been selected as the *Poetry Book Society* Pamphlet choice, and has been featured in journals including *Poetry Review*, *Poetry London*, *bath magg*, *Sick* and *Tentacular*, and on *BBC Radio 4*.

'This outstanding collection is compelling from the first poem, with its mix of sensual detail and thought. Just as in the illness of which this book is a description, the poet pushes the boundaries of sense to their limit, but never beyond. Here are gorgeous love poems and a radical attack on the chronology of time. A triumph.'

– Gwyneth Lewis

by the platform where there are no words
stars punch holes in the roof of a nissan
here without you I am holes too

From *again again*
© William Gee

2024 WINNER
YANITA GEORGIEVA*Small Undetectable Thefts*

Yanita Georgieva is a poet and journalist. She was born in Bulgaria, raised in Lebanon, and now lives in London. Her debut pamphlet *Small Undetectable Thefts* was published by Broken Sleep. In 2022, she received the Out-Spoken Prize for Page Poetry and was shortlisted for the Ivan Juritz Prize.

'Georgieva's Small Undetectable Thefts was one of my favorite overall entries for the Eric Gregory award in 2024. A delight to read, a voice worthy of championing.'

– Raymond Antrobus

Some nights I wake up thinking I've ruined my life. It's
always the same dream: two sweaty hands on the wheel of
a car I can't drive.

From *Small Undetectable Thefts*
© Yanita Georgieva

2024 WINNER

NATHANIEL KING

Ghost Clinic

Nathaniel King is a poet from Cornwall, UK. His work has appeared in *bath magg*, *Berlin Lit*, *Butcher's Dog*, *Eggbox Press* and *Lighthouse*. He is currently completing his PhD in folklore and hauntological poetics at Royal Holloway, and lives and teaches in London.

'At both line level and overall poetic conceit, all the judges were bowed over by the quality of King's Ghost Clinic.'

– Raymond Antrobus

Ghost Clinic began, and is perhaps destined to remain, an inscrutable factory. A place to launder the dead.
A rumour of emancipation.

From *Ghost Clinic*

© Nathaniel King and Broken Sleep Books

2024 WINNER

FRANCIS-XAVIER MUKIIBI

Mutabani & []ther Poems

Francis-Xavier Mukiibi is a poet and spoken word performer of Ugandan heritage from North London. He is an alumnus of the Barbican Young Poets programme, the Roundhouse Poetry Collective and the Obsidian Foundation retreat. He produced one of 40 short poetry films in early 2024 as part of Apples and Snakes' Future Voices programme.

'An attuned incandescent poetic voice. This poet has a future.'

– Raymond Antrobus

By holding Mother's candlestick to our chipped smiles,
whilst oil becomes mouthwash from which we spit
Sahara sun, how long until playground cage tongues are
lifted from gravel?

From 'Full'

© Francis-Xavier Mukiibi

Betty Trask left a bequest to the Society of Authors to fund prizes for first novels written by authors under the age of 35 in a traditional or romantic style.

The winner is awarded £10,000 and each shortlisted author receives £3,240.

Judges: Michael Donkor, Anjali Joseph and Alex Preston

2024 Shortlist

Stephen Buoro for *The Five Sorrowful Mysteries of Andy Africa* (Bloomsbury Publishing)

Rachel Connolly for *Lazy City* (Canongate Books)

Tom Crewe for *The New Life* (Vintage, Chatto & Windus)

Rachel Dawson for *Neon Roses* (John Murray, Hachette)

C.E. McGill for *Our Hideous Progeny* (Doubleday, Penguin Random House UK)

Nathan Munday for *Whaling* (Seren)

'The shortlist this year includes several historical novels, and a few that take elements of classics and make them into something new. All of the shortlisted novels delighted us with their freshness and each had a voice that was distinctively and recognisably its own.'

– Anjali Joseph

2024 WINNER

TOM CREWE

The New Life (Vintage, Chatto & Windus)

Tom Crewe was born in Middlesbrough in 1989. He has a PhD in nineteenth century British history from the University of Cambridge. Since 2015, he has been an editor at the *London Review of Books*, to which he contributes essays on politics, art, history and fiction.



'The New Life is a preternaturally accomplished debut. It's a jewel of a novel: exquisitely crafted, multifaceted, luminous. Tom Crewe's evocation of late nineteenth century London and its contemporary debates about sexual mores is so skilful. There is an enviable balance between disclosure and restraint in the prose which gives the novel its distinct feeling of sophistication. It's a deeply sexy read too – fleshy and embodied – and it fearlessly looks at what it means and what it can cost to desire.'

– Michael Donkor

In memory of Paul Torday, for debut novels by authors aged 60 or over. Sponsored by Hawthornden Foundation and the Torday Family.



The winner is awarded £3,000 and a set of Paul Torday's novels. The runner-up receives £1,000 and one selected Paul Torday novel.

Judges: Anni Domingo, Gaby Koppel and Trevor Wood



2024 Shortlist:

Jacqueline Crooks for *Fire Rush* (Vintage, Jonathan Cape)

Justine Gilbert for *Daisy Chain* (Claret Press)

Fran Hill for *Cuckoo in the Nest* (Legend Press)

Hilary Taylor for *Sea Defences* (Eye Books)

Micheline Wandor for *Orfeo's Last Act* (Greenwich Exchange)

'I found the entries as a whole bursting with creative energy, wisdom and often humour. All of them challenge the cliches about ageing by showing that mature minds can master the art of writing fiction, but also go beyond that, entering into fresh territory to produce original work, crackling with imagination and ideas.'

– Gaby Koppel

2024 RUNNER-UP

FRAN HILL

Cuckoo in the Nest (Legend Press)

Fran Hill is a 62-year-old retired English teacher from Warwickshire who published a memoir about the teaching life in 2020. *Cuckoo in the Nest* is her first full-length work of fiction and is inspired by her own experience of being in care in the 1970s.



'It's so difficult to do funny and moving but Fran Hill nails it. Cuckoo in the Nest is so well-written and clever, turning the usual stereotypes on their heads, that you could easily read it in one sitting. A girl from a broken home discovers that her apparently well-balanced foster family is just as damaged as her own and helps to repair them. I enjoyed every word of it.'

– Trevor Wood

2024 WINNER

JACQUELINE CROOKS

Fire Rush (Vintage, Jonathan Cape)

Jacqueline Crooks grew up in 70s and 80s Southall, part of London's migrant community carving out a space through music, culture and politics. Immersed in the gang underworld as a young woman, she later discovered the power of writing and music to help her look outwards and engage differently with the world – a power that has driven her ever since, from her work with charities to her short stories, which have been nominated for The Women's Prize for Fiction, The Jhalak Prize, Waterstones Debut Fiction Prize, and the Orwell Prize for Political Fiction.



'An enthralling, ambitious novel about love and the power of music. It is a novel full of passion and anger and grief as Yamaye searches for her identity. Fire Rush is a tremendous achievement from a great original voice. I was completely drawn into the world that Crooks creates.'

– Anni Domingo

We would like to thank all our generous sponsors and supporters of our SoA Awards: ALCS, Arts Council England, Nicholas Allan, Ramdei Bowker, the Drusilla Harvey Memorial Fund, Hawthornden Foundation, the Paul Torday family, the Professional Writing Academy, and the many trusts through which our prizes are funded.



Hawthornden
Foundation



ADCILiterary Prize



Continue the celebrations online by sharing all your pictures and memories from this year's SoA Awards summer party by tagging us @soc_of_authors on X and @thesocietyofauthors on Instagram with #SoAwards

The Society of Authors is the UK trade union for all types of writers, illustrators and literary translators at all stages of their careers. We have been advising individuals and speaking out for the profession for more than a century.

We administer prizes and awards to support and celebrate authors of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, literary translation, audio drama and educational writing. In addition to this evening's prizes, we manage The Sunday Times Charlotte Aitken Trust Young Writer of the Year Award, numerous prizes for literary translation, and the ALCS Educational Writers' Award. Each year we also distribute a range of grants for works in progress and for authors in need.

With thanks to our generous sponsors, **Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS)**.

ALCS is a not-for-profit organisation started by writers for the benefit of all types of writers. Owned by its members, ALCS collects money due for secondary uses of writers' work. It is designed to support authors and their creativity, ensure they receive fair payment and see their rights are respected. It promotes and teaches the principles of copyright and campaigns for a fair deal. It represents over 100,000 members, and since 1977 has paid around £500 million to writers. Find out more about the work ALCS do for writers: alcs.co.uk.



Designed by Natalie Thorpe