



2023

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

To the 48 judges of these 11 prizes and awards, we appreciate the skill and knowledge you have brought to this year's judging process and thank you for your many hours of reading and discussion to discover our 2023 winners and shortlistees.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Val McDermid for hosting this year's ceremony.

Thank you to the SoA's Management Committee and their Chair, Joanne Harris, for their continued support, and to the SoA staff team without whom the Awards would not be possible.

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



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Society of Authors' Awards 2023

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

29 June 2023
Southwark Cathedral
London SE1 9DA

Presented by Joanne Harris Key note by Val McDermid



JOANNE HARRIS (OBE) was born in Barnsley in 1964, of a French mother and an English father. She studied Modern and Mediaeval Languages at Cambridge and was a teacher for 15 years, during which time she published three novels, including *Chocolat* (1999), which was made into an Oscar-nominated film. Since then, she has written 19 more novels, plus novellas, short stories, game scripts, the libretti for two short operas, several screenplays, a stage musical (with Howard Goodall) and three cookbooks. Her books are now published in over 50 countries and have won a number of British and international awards. She is a passionate advocate for authors' rights, and is currently the Chair of the Society of Authors (SOA), and member of the board of the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS) and a fellow of the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC). She works from a shed in her garden, plays in the band she first joined when she was 16, and lives with her husband in a little wood in Yorkshire.



CHARLOTTE GRAHAM

VAL MCDERMID is a celebrated crime writer who has sold over 19 million books in more than 40 languages. She writes for television and several of her books have also been adapted for the screen. In the past, she has been a judge of the Women's Prize for Fiction and the Man Booker Prize.

The ADCI Literary Prize

The ADCI (Authors with Disabilities and Chronic Illnesses) Literary Prize for a novel by a disabled or chronically ill author, featuring a disabled or chronically ill character, founded in 2022 and awarded for the first time in 2023.

This prize aims to encourage disabled and chronically ill authors as well as highlighting the need for wider representation of disabled and chronically ill characters in mainstream literature.

Generously supported by ALCS, Arts Council England, the Drusilla Harvey Memorial Fund, and the Professional Writing Academy.

The total prize fund for 2023 is £2,000

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

2023 Shortlist

Nicola Griffith for *Spear* (Tordotcom Publishing)

Deborah Jenkins for *Braver* (Fairlight Books)

Fiona Scott-Barrett for *The Exit Facility* (Self Published)

It was a delight to see so many different novel genres represented in the prize's submissions and, with fantasy/myth, speculative and UpLit, the shortlist reflects this. There's something for all fiction lovers.

Penny Batchelor

WINNER

Nicola Griffith

for *Spear*

(Tordotcom Publishing)

- £1,250

Nicola Griffith (she/her) is a dual UK/US citizen living in Seattle. She is the author of seven award-winning novels, including *Hild* and *Ammonite*, and her shorter work has appeared in *Nature*, *New Scientist*, *New York Times*, etc. She is the founder and co-host of #CripLit, holds a PhD from Anglia Ruskin University, and enjoys a ferocious bout of wheelchair boxing. She is married to novelist and screenwriter Kelley Eskridge.

I was hugely impressed by this work. There is real ambition and fluidity to the writing. It represents a vast amount of research and yet it wears that research lightly. While there was much recognizable to anyone with a glancing knowledge of Arthurian legend, there was also much that felt new. Griffith combines pre-existing myths in inventive and delightful ways. The representation in this story is joyful — acknowledging what might cause a character to be seen as other but finding no shame in it.

Rowan Hisayo Buchanan

The ADCI Literary Prize

RUNNER UP

Fiona Scott-Barrett
for *The Exit Facility*
(Self-Published)
- £750

Fiona Scott-Barrett was in her twenties when she was diagnosed as having Best disease, a degenerative eye condition that leads to the gradual loss of central vision. After an internationally successful career as an author of textbooks for students of English as a Foreign Language, Fiona returned to the UK and took up writing fiction. *The Exit Facility*, which features a heroine with Best disease, is her debut novel. Fiona is currently working on her second novel, which is inspired by her time living on the island of Crete, and is attending a short course in experimental writing at the University of Edinburgh. She has been a member of the Society of Authors since 1996.

The Exit Facility is a compelling, engaging novel which transports you to a world you might expect to see on Black Mirror. The disability representation is handled expertly, resulting in true to life characters and a story you won't forget in a hurry.
Vikki Patis

The Gordon Bowker Volcano Prize

Awarded since 2022

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.

Judges: Aamer Hussein, Zeba Talkhani and Kerry Young

The total prize fund for 2023 is £2,750

2023 Shortlist

Aamina Ahmad for *The Return of Faraz Ali* (Sceptre, Hodder and Stoughton)
Julia Armfield for *Our Wives Under the Sea* (Picador, Pan Macmillan)
Vesna Goldsworthy for *Iron Curtain: A Love Story* (Penguin Random House UK, Vintage)
Alex Hyde for *Violets* (Granta Books)
Anjali Joseph for *Keeping in Touch* (Scribe UK)
David Park for *Spies in Canaan* (Bloomsbury Publishing)

The 2023 Gordon Bowker Volcano Prize shortlist is an eclectic mix. Historic, contemporary and futuristic. Taking us around the world from Europe to South and East Asia, and even under the sea.
Kerry Young

The Gordon Bowker Volcano Prize

WINNER

Aamina Ahmad
for *The Return of Faraz Ali*
(Sceptre, Hodder
and Stoughton)
- £2,000

Aamina Ahmad was born and raised in London, where she worked for BBC Drama and other independent television companies as a script editor. Her play *The Dishonoured* was produced by Kali Theatre Company in 2016. She has an MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop and is a recipient of a Stegner Fellowship from Stanford University, a Pushcart Prize and a Rona Jaffe Writers Award. Her short fiction has appeared in journals including One Story, the Southern Review and Ecotone. She teaches creative writing at the University of Minnesota.

In her ambitious and accomplished first novel, Aamina Ahmad chronicles the lives of her protagonist and his fragmented family against a backdrop of wars, divided nations, and turbulent national and international histories. Spanning several decades, this is a skillfully crafted evocation of place, time and memory, at the meeting point of private tragedy and public turmoil.

Aamer Hussein

RUNNER UP

David Park
for *Spies in Canaan*
(Bloomsbury Publishing)
- £750

David Park has written nine novels and two collections of short stories. His novel *Travelling in a Strange Land* won the Kerry Group Irish Novel of the Year. His other books include *The Light of Amsterdam*, which was shortlisted for the 2014 International IMPAC Prize and *The Poets' Wives*, which was selected as Belfast's Choice for One City One Book 2014. He has won the Authors' Club First Novel Award, the Bass Ireland Arts Award for Literature, the Ewart-Biggs Memorial Prize and the American Ireland Fund Literary Award. He has received a Major Individual Artist Award from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and been shortlisted for the Irish Novel of the Year Award four times. In 2014 he was longlisted for the Sunday Times EFG Short Story Award. He lives in County Down, Northern Ireland.

Spies in Canaan is a reminder that the telling of events, past or present is, in part, fact, but in larger part, personal perception and interpretation. Not that David Park's take on the US war in Vietnam is new, but his observant and engaging narrative casts a discerning light on the interconnectedness between the personal and the political, and the impact of the one on the other.

Kerry Young

The Somerset Maugham Awards

Enabling young writers to enrich their work through experience of foreign countries

Awarded since 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.

Judges: Fred D'Aguiar, Ardashir Vakil and Roseanne Watt

The total award fund for 2023 is £16,200

This year's submissions were strong. All the entries spoke to us with eloquence and power. The range of work in terms of subject and writers testify to the wealth of books published and the healthy numbers of writers who answer the call of these times of strife and need. The intersections between the so-called genres of poetry, fiction and non-fiction, made reading the many entries both challenging and rewarding. The Somerset Maugham internationalises the idea of how writers work and why readers need to read their books.

Fred D'Aguiar

The Somerset Maugham Award Winners

Travis Alabanza
for *None of the Above*
(Canongate Books)
- £2,700

Travis Alabanza is an award-winning writer, performer and theatre maker. After being the youngest recipient of the Artist-in-Residency programme at Tate Galleries, Alabanza's debut show *Burgerz* toured internationally to sold-out performances in the Southbank Centre, Sao Paulo, Brazil, and HAU, Berlin, and won the Edinburgh Fringe Total Theatre Award. In 2020 their theatre show *Overflow* debuted at the Bush Theatre to widespread acclaim and later streamed online in over 20 countries. Their recent play *Sound of The Underground* was awarded 5 stars in the Guardian after its Royal Court Theatre run. In 2022 they released their debut book, *None of the Above*, with Canongate.

None of the Above is an urgent and moving testimony to the vicissitudes of living as a non-binary person of colour in modern Britain. Travis Alabanza shows us, through personal examples, the restrictions, abuse and violence, both actual and verbal, faced by a trans person on a daily basis. The book uses a clever structure to examine some commonly held beliefs and prejudices in society. Alabanza finds a path through uncertainty and loneliness to celebrate the joy of being trans.

Ardashir Vakil

The Somerset Maugham Award Winners

Sussie Anie
for *To Fill a Yellow House*
(Phoenix, Weidenfeld
& Nicolson) - £2,700

Sussie Anie is a British-Ghanaian writer, born in London in 1994. Her writing has been published in *Lolwe*, and was shortlisted for the 2020 White Review Short Story Prize. She has an MA in Creative Writing from the University of East Anglia, where she was the recipient of the 2018-19 Kowitz Scholarship. Her debut novel *To Fill a Yellow House* was longlisted for the 2023 Authors' Club Best First Novel Award.

Sussie Anie in To Fill a Yellow House shows us what happens when change strikes in two places at the same time: at personal and communal levels. She captures the consciousness of the young and charts the growth of a conscience geared towards the communal. She furnishes the heart struck with grief over the loss of a loved one with friendship between unlikely alliances and across generations.

Fred D'Aguiar

Mya-Rose Craig
for *Birdgirl*
(Jonathan Cape, Penguin
Random House UK)
- £2,700

Mya-Rose Craig, also known as Birdgirl, is a 20-year-old British-Bangladeshi birder, environmentalist and diversity activist. She campaigns for equal access to nature and to end the climate and biodiversity loss crises, issues that she believes are intrinsically linked, whilst promoting Global Climate Justice. She is an Ambassador for Survival International and fights for the rights of indigenous peoples; she has previously written a book amplifying their voices. At the age of 14 she founded Black2Nature to engage minority ethnic teenagers with nature and at 17 she became the youngest Briton to receive an honorary Doctorate, awarded by Bristol University for this pioneering work. Also at 17, she became the youngest person to see half the world's bird species and shared a stage with Greta Thunberg, speaking to 40,000 protestors.

Birdgirl is the quite extraordinary story of the journey from girlhood to young woman. Mya's journeys all around the world accompanied by her White father and her bipolar mother of Bangladeshi origin; logging and counting up new sightings of rare creatures, dealing with the vagaries of her mother's mental health, and showing us how, all these experiences made her into an anti-racist climate and ecology activist, were exuberant and inspiring.

Ardashir Vakil

The Somerset Maugham Award Winners

Jay Gao
for *Imperium*
(Carcanet Press)
- £2,700

Jay Gao is the author of three poetry pamphlets: *TRAVESTY58* (2022); *Katabasis* (2020), a winner of a New Poets Prize; and *Wedding Beasts* (2019), shortlisted for the Saltire-Callum MacDonald Award. He is a Contributing Editor at The White Review. Originally from Edinburgh, Scotland, he earned his MFA at Brown University, and is currently a PhD student at Columbia University.

Jay Gao reminds us in this stunning debut poetry collection, Imperium, that difficulty trades in the spiritual and material. His loosely-based Odyssey showcases a contemporary journey across libraries, book-making, conceptual poetry, sexuality and internationalism, whilst still championing Scotland, his Chinese heritage and sense of continual dislocation as echolocations, as ways of finding out about our plural selves and shifting shapes of the places where we belong, albeit temporarily, nominally, though no less meaningfully.

Fred D'Aguair

Gurnaik Johal
for *We Move*
(Profile Books,
Serpent's Tail)
- £2,700

Gurnaik Johal is a writer from West London born in 1998. He was shortlisted for The Guardian 4th Estate BAME Short Story Prize in 2018 and graduated from The University of Manchester in 2019. He works in children's publishing.

Gurnaik Johal's stories are varied, original and seductive. His array of characters, many of whom come from the British Sikh community in West London, are sensitively depicted. They draw you in with their desires. The stories in We Move are alive to the particularities of contemporary urban life as well as the many histories that exist behind the stories of the protagonists. Johal's expression is delicate but sure; the manipulations of structure and time are expertly deployed.

Ardashir Vakil

The Somerset Maugham Award Winners

Moses McKenzie

for *An Olive Grove in Ends*
(Headline, Wildfire)
- £2,700

Moses McKenzie is of Caribbean descent and grew up in Bristol, where he still lives and writes full-time. *An Olive Grove in Ends* is his first novel.

Moses McKenzie writes An Olive Grove in Ends with a confidence beyond his years. He creates a vibrant community across the generations and with a Caribbean flavour of language and culture in healthy remission in Bristol as it is all over the UK. He's not afraid of difficulty, of declaring a moral compass to his writer's craft. An Olive Grove in Ends marks the beginning of a talented chronicler of community and the place of the arts in it.

Fred D'Aguair

The Travelling Scholarships

Awards founded in 1944

Enabling authors to travel and engage with writers abroad

The total award fund for 2023 is £8,000

Assessors: Emily Barr, Gabriel Gbadamosi, Anne McElvoy, Alvin Pang and Philip Terry

All writers need to travel, and the Travelling Scholarship Award helps them do just that. It's a particularly exciting prize, as there are no limits on the kind of work it supports. This year's awards have gone to a dazzling and eclectic mix of writers, from experimental translators, to cutting-edge journalists, genre-bending novelists, and young adult fabulists.

Philip Terry

The Travelling Scholarships

Sulaiman Addonia
- £1,600

Sulaiman Addonia is a British-Eritrean-Ethiopian writer. His second novel, *Silence is My Mother Tongue*, was published by Indigo Press (2019) & *Graywolf* (2020). Addonia currently lives in Brussels, where he has launched a Creative Writing Academy for Refugees & Asylum Seekers and the Asmara-Addis Literary Festival (In Exile.) In 2021, he was awarded Belgium's Golden Afro Artistic Award for Literature. In 2022, he was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society.

The work of Sulaiman Addonia, steeped in his lived experience as a child refugee, is infused with wholly original characters who express a social, political, sexual, moral and psychological complexity and deep humanity that defy and transcend conventional notions of the refugee figure. Addonia's literary work extends beyond his striking essays and novels to activities that centre the voices of refugees, migrants and other creative voices in the margins, as part of a commitment to international engagement as an ethical expression of the work of literature.

Alvin Pang

Tim Atkins
- £1,600

Tim Atkin's books of poetry, photobooks, and creative nonfiction have been published in the USA, Canada, France, and the UK. He has been a member of the summer faculty at The Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa University, and his latest book *Nothing...* is out from Crater Press.

We loved the verve and originality of Tim Atkins's reinvention of Ovid in exile in Nothing, the way he inhabits and subverts an ancient text to bring it right into the present, while simultaneously treating Ovid with respect. We see Ovid born again, as the first passive-aggressive writer in the canon, and one of the funniest, as he takes pot shots from the margins of society at everything that's wrong with it, from millionaire MPs to species depletion, to the migrant crisis, militarism, torture, fly tipping, sound poetry and climate change. At once urgent, sombre, beautiful and hilarious, this is the voice of the poetry of the future, now.

Philip Terry

The Travelling Scholarships

Anjali Joseph
- £1,600

Anjali Joseph was born in Bombay and lives in Oxford. She wrote *Saraswati Park*, *Another Country*, *The Living*, and *Keeping in Touch*, and has won the Betty Trask Prize, Desmond Elliott Prize, and Vodafone Crossword Book Award for Fiction. She is working on a novel called *Attunement*.

Anjali Joseph's award-winning novels are deeply impressive for their sensitivity, curiosity, control and formal, understated elegance. She speaks persuasively and movingly about the pull of dual cultures which so many of us experience. Her next writing project is a creative response to the Anglo-Irish writer Edith Somerville (1858-1949), a fellow child of Empire, who wrote novels and short stories in collaboration with 'Martin Ross' (her cousin, Violet Martin), both disguising their gender as 'Somerville and Ross', and continuing as a collaboration even after the death of Violet. Joseph continues to explore fugitive identity, now developed through shared subjectivity and sensibility.

Gabriel Gbadamosi

Jen Stout
- £1,600

Jen Stout is a correspondent, radio producer and photojournalist from Shetland. She's been covering the war in Ukraine since the full-scale invasion, prior to which she was in Moscow on the Alfa Fellowship. She's worked in TV and radio at BBC Scotland, and started out on a local paper in Stranraer.

It's a long road from starting a writing career in Shetland to covering events unfolding in the basements and rubble of Ukraine, but Jen Stout travels it with aplomb, her specialism is gaining the trust and spending time with people in terrible circumstances and allowing them to tell their stories of the war, interwoven with her observations and descriptions. It's a skill which owed much to Martha Gellhorn's tradition of blending brisk engaged narrative and reflection. Stout's mix of photography, written narrative and audio in her portfolio is compelling and so is her eye for the story that stands out for readers among much reporting of places that are, as she puts it, "not the cheeriest". It's a prime example of her commitment to telling war stories with a wider cultural significance.

Anne McElvoy

The Travelling Scholarships

Piers Torday
- £1,600

Piers Torday is a former theatre and television producer. His books include *The Last Wild* (Shortlisted for Waterstones Children's Book Prize), *The Dark Wild* (Guardian Children's Fiction Prize), *The Lost Magician* (Teach Primary Book Award). His latest book is *The Wild Before*. He is the Children's Fiction Writing Coach for the online academy The Novelry and teaches an online course on writing fantasy fiction for Domestika. The son of Paul Torday (*Salmon Fishing in the Yemen*), he completed his father's final unfinished novel, *The Death of an Owl* and co-founded the Paul Torday Memorial Prize for Debut Novelists over 60, now in its fifth year.

Piers Torday's books are for children and for everyone who's ever been a child. Torday takes his reader into a magical world that's rooted in reality, and, with the gentlest of touches, makes us think, and gives us hope. He casts a clear eye over the natural world, understanding the anxieties the current generation of children have regarding nature, and writing about it in a way that never makes his reader feel hopeless or confronted. Magical, lyrical, funny and hopeful.

Emily Barr

The ALCS Tom-Gallon Trust Award

Founded by Nellie Tom-Gallon in memory of her brother in 1938 and now generously funded by the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS) and the Hawthornden Foundation.

For a short story of up to 5,000 words

The total prize fund for 2023 is £5,000

Judges: Claire Fuller, Sophie Haydock, Billy Kahora and Mary Watson

2023 Shortlist

Joe Bedford for 'The Christening'

Ciarán Folan for 'A Day'

Kerry Hood for 'The Sunbathers'

Niamh Mac Gabe for 'Sky an Iris'

Lishani Ramanayake for 'Amba Yahulowo'

Karen Stevens for 'Among the Crows'

As judges, we've been plunged into many magical, suspenseful, strange and surprising short stories while judging the ALCS Tom-Gallon Trust Award each one brimming with talent, bursting at the edges with perspectives on how we experience the world around us. Every story on the shortlist has so much to admire. And with the support of the Society of Authors, I'm excited that these stories will be read more widely and the authors given the recognition they deserve.

Sophie Haydock

The ALCS Tom-Gallon Trust Award

WINNER

Ciarán Folan
for 'A Day'
- £2,000

'There were a few hearts with names inscribed inside them, done no doubt by some of the girls of first and second classes. He looked for Maggie's work among them, but could see no sign of it. Every day, in the week leading up to the holidays, he'd heard them singing that old song about summer: "Samhradh, samhradh"'

© Ciarán Folan 'A Day'

Ciarán Folan has had stories published in The Dublin Review, The London Magazine, Prole and with The Stinging Fly online. He won the RTÉ Francis MacManus Short Story Competition twice and was a runner up for the Michael McLaverty Short Story Award in 2016 and 2018. He was shortlisted for the V S Pritchett Short Story Prize in 2020.

Our winning story drew me in from the very beginning, and then looped the idea of time over and under and over again so cleverly that I was never lost but felt I knew everything I needed to know about these characters and their situation. With its beautiful melancholic tone, 'A Day' by Ciaran Folan is storytelling at its very best.
Claire Fuller

RUNNER UP

Karen Stevens
for 'Among the Crows'
- £1,000

*"You don't want to know anything more about where I come from?" Mac sighed.
'If there's that much to talk about, why you living over here, mate?' Scar Head said.
Andy caught a look passing between the couple; something superior'*

© Karen Stevens
'Among the Crows'

Karen Stevens is a writer and lecturer in creative writing at the University of Chichester, West Sussex. Her short stories have been published in The Big Issue, Pulp Net, Panurge New Fiction, Mouth Ogres, Dreaming Beasts, Fish Publishing, Riptide, Salt Publishing, Valley Press. Her edited collection of essays, *Writing a First Novel: Reflections on the Journey*, was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2014. Her edited collection of short stories *High Spirits: A Round of Drinking Stories* was published by Valley Press in 2018 and won the Saboteur Award for Best Anthology 2019, and was chosen for the Summer Recess Reading List for Parliamentarians.

'Among the Crows' works beautifully to depict a moment of disruption, an instance where something unexpected occurs, altering the characters' understanding of themselves. This is an engaging and compelling read.
Mary Watson

The Paul Torday Memorial Prize

Founded by the family of Paul Torday in 2019 to celebrate debut novelists over 60. Generously supported by the Hawthornden Foundation.

The total prize fund for 2023 is £4,000

The winner will receive a full set of Torday's collected works and the runner up will receive one specially selected novel with a commemorative book plate.

Judges: Rasheda Ashanti Malcolm, Kathy O'Shaughnessy and Andrew Taylor

2023 Shortlist

Reverend Richard Coles for *Murder Before Evensong* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson)

Tony Curtis for *Darkness in the City of Light* (Seren Books)

Jonathan Franklin for *Red Road Green* (Sparsile Books Ltd)

Bonnie Garmus for *Lessons in Chemistry* (Doubleday, Penguin Random House)

Julie Owen Moylan for *That Green Eyed Girl* (Michael Joseph, Penguin Random House UK)

From historical novels to thrillers to romance, the novels on this shortlist were wonderfully varied. It was a pleasure to see such excellent writing, whether set in the Amazon or a local English village, or 1950s America, or Paris in the war. Each book showed a true writer's commitment to making the subject come alive, and compellingly pulled this reader forward.

Kathy O'Shaughnessy

WINNER

Bonnie Garmus

for *Lessons in Chemistry*
(Doubleday, Penguin
Random House UK)
- £3,000

Bonnie Garmus is a copywriter and creative director who has worked widely in the fields of technology, medicine, and education. She is an open-water swimmer, a rower, and mother to two wonderful daughters. Born in California and most recently from Seattle, she currently lives in London with her husband and her dog, 99. Her first novel, *Lessons in Chemistry* is a No.1 Sunday Times, New York Times and international bestseller. It has been translated into over forty territories and is being adapted as an Apple TV series starring Brie Larson.

It's difficult to believe that Lessons in Chemistry is Bonnie Garmus's first novel. Her central character, Elizabeth Zott, springs off the page and confronts us with such wit and authority that she seems always to have existed somewhere between Southern California and the land of wishful thinking. Zott takes the starring role in this delicious tale of the proto-feminist revenge.
Andrew Taylor

The Paul Torday Memorial Prize

RUNNER UP

Julie Owen Moylan
for *That Green Eyed Girl*
(Michael Joseph, Penguin
Random House UK)
- £1,000

Julie Owen Moylan was born in Cardiff and has worked in a variety of jobs from trainee hairdresser and chip shop attendant at sixteen to business management consultant and college lecturer in her thirties.

Julie Owen Moylan engages our attention with her riveting first sentence and holds on to it from the first page to the last. Technically challenging with its split narrative, That Green Eyed Girl is populated with memorable characters and set mainly in a lost but vividly realised New York City. This is a story of love and loss that will linger in the mind long after you've finished it.

Andrew Taylor

The McKitterick Prize

Founded in 1990 by Tom McKitterick and sponsored by the Hawthornden Foundation. Open to debut novels by writers aged 40 years and over.

The total prize fund for 2023 is £10,000

Judges: Selma Dabbagh, Rebecca Foster, Gonzalo C Garcia, Kelleigh Greenberg-Jephcott, Anietie Isong, Nick Rennison

2023 Shortlist

Aamina Ahmad for *The Return of Faraz Ali* (Sceptre, Hodder & Stoughton)
Ayanna Lloyd Banwo for *When We Were Birds* (Hamish Hamilton, Penguin Random House UK)

Liz Hyder for *The Gifts* (Manilla Press, Bonnier Books UK)

Louise Kennedy for *Trespasses* (Bloomsbury Publishing)

Joanna Quinn for *The Whalebone Theatre* (Fig Tree, Penguin Random House UK)

Taymour Soomro for *Other Names for Love* (Harvill Secker, Penguin Random House UK)

Family estates in rural Pakistan and England fall into decline reflecting the hubris and short-sightedness of their owners, while in other tales, it is the decaying grandeur of the courtesans of Lahore that is lovingly depicted in others. The otherworldliness of these stories brings new possibilities to the tawdry and impoverished as mystical wings fly over the slums of Victorian London and the graveyards of Trinidad.

Selma Debbagh

The McKitterick Prize

WINNER

Louise Kennedy
for *Trespasses*
(Bloomsbury Publishing)
- £4,000

Louise Kennedy grew up a few miles from Belfast. She is the author of the Women's Prize shortlisted novel, *Trespasses*, and the acclaimed short story collection, *The End of the World is a Cul de Sac*, and is the only woman to have been shortlisted twice for the Sunday Times Audible Short Story Award (2019 and 2020). Before starting her writing career, she spent nearly thirty years working as a chef. She lives in Sligo.

An intelligent, delicately told tale of love under military rule where allegiances and vulnerabilities shift from one scene to the next, as a mis-matched couple lunge towards each other with desire. Told against a backdrop of ruined dreams, alcoholism and discoloured food, Trespasses is a unique account of a period of British and Irish history of systematic oppression, challenged loyalties, criminality, alienation and bloodshed.

Selma Dabbagh

RUNNER UP

Liz Hyder
for *The Gifts*
(Manilla Press,
Bonnie Books UK)
- £2,000

Liz Hyder has been making up stories for as long she can remember. She has a BA in drama from the University of Bristol and, in early 2018, won the Bridge Award/Moniack Mhor Emerging Writer Award. *Bearmouth*, her debut young adult novel, won a Waterstones Children's Book Prize, the Branford Boase Award and was chosen as the Children's Book of the Year by The Times. Originally from London, she now lives in South Shropshire. *The Gifts* is her debut adult novel.

Re-examining the Victorian Sensation Novel through a feminist lens, The Gifts gives voice to not one female protagonist, but four. Through their rich and diverse perspectives, the archetypal Gothic Heroine ventures beyond roles occupied by her male counterparts, into a wildly imaginative sphere of magical realism. Hyder creates a quartet of women ahead of their time, united by overlapping journeys of transformation, sprouting wings that range from the literal to the spiritual. With shades of Wilkie Collins by way of Jeanette Winterson, The Gifts is a genre-bending tour de force.

Kelleigh Greenberg-Jephcott

The Queen's Knickers Award

Founded in 2020 and funded by Nicholas Allan and awarded to an outstanding children's original illustrated book for ages 0-7.

It will recognise books that strike a quirky, new note and grab the attention of a child, whether this be in the form of curiosity, amusement, horror or excitement.

The total prize fund for 2023 is £6,000

Judges: Smriti Halls, Sarah McIntyre and Ken Wilson-Max

2023 Shortlist

John Agard and Satoshi Kitamura for *When Creature met Creature* (Sallywag Press)

Beach for *The Knight with the Blazing Bottom* (Simon and Schuster)

Olaf Falafel for *Blobfish* (Walker Books Ltd)

Chris Naylor-Ballesteros for *Frank and Bert* (Nosy Crow)

Caspar Salmon and Matt Hunt for *How to Count to One* (Nosy Crow)

The books on the Queen's Knickers shortlist stood out clearly for their humour and originality. Visually they were all inspiring; I could imagine children sitting down to copy out their favourite bits, testing new ways to draw things and different ways to tell a story, or to joke with the reader.

Sarah McIntyre

WINNER

Olaf Falafel
for *Blobfish*
(Walker Books Ltd)
- £5,000

Olaf Falafel is an award-winning comedian, children's author and illustrator. In 2020, Olaf started 'Art Club' – a YouTube series packed with jokes, how-to-draw tutorials, technical tips and tricks as well as a few fantastically silly songs. Olaf's recent books include *Unleash Your Creative Monster: A Children's Guide to Writing* written by Andy Jones, and bright and bold illustrations. Olaf lives in Bedfordshire; find out more about his work at www.olaffalafel.com

I loved the way Olaf Falafel combined a simple cartooning style with texture and magic underwater lighting that gave the goofy story and character brief touches of the sublime. As judges, we all liked the way the story had an environmental message about keeping our beaches clean, but we appreciated how it didn't do it in a way that would leave children feeling sad and helpless. Rather, it showed people on the beach doing the right thing, naturally tidying up and being helpful, in a simple, concrete way that children could immediately put into practice. I hope children will be inspired to write and draw the further comic adventures of Blobfish!

Sarah McIntyre

The Queen's Knickers Award

RUNNERS UP

John Agard and Satoshi Kitamura
for *When Creature met Creature*
(Sallywag Press)
- £1,000

John Agard is a poet, performer and anthologist. He was born in Guyana and came to Britain in 1977. He was awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry and the Eleanor Farjeon Award and currently lives in Lewes, East Sussex.

Satoshi Kitamura has created over twenty picture books, and illustrated many more. He has won awards such as the Mother Goose Award, Silver Award for the Smarties Prize, and the National Art Library Illustrations Award and has been shortlisted for the BookTrust Storytime Prize.

When Creature met Creature is one of those books that, if you have been lucky enough to hear John Agard perform, comes alive with his voice. Then the estranged characters — real creatures of no description — start to change in your mind. It's a fantastic effort from a long-standing duo.

Ken Wilson-Max

The Cholmondeley Awards

Founded in 1971 by the late Dowager Marchioness of Cholmondeley

Recognising achievement and distinction in poetry

The total award fund for 2023 is £8,400

Assessors: Moniza Alvi, Hannah Lowe and Deryn Rees-Jones

The Cholmondeley Awards have been, since they were introduced in 1966, important honorary awards that recognise poets' sustained excellence across a body of work. Some of the recipients will already be well-known in the poetry world, while others may be deserving of wider recognition for the distinction of their writing. Many of them will have contributed to the genre in a variety of ways, through their performances and tutoring, for example. The Cholmondeley Awards prove that excellence can be perceived across a wide range of poetry from a diversity of poets. It is hoped that the recipients will feel valued, encouraged and truly celebrated

Moniza Alvi

The Cholmondeley Award Winners

Caroline Bird
- £1,400

Caroline Bird is a poet and playwright. Her sixth collection, *The Air Year*, won the Forward Prize for Best Collection 2020 and was shortlisted for the Polari Prize and the Costa Prize. Her fifth collection, *In These Days of Prohibition*, was shortlisted for the 2017 TS Eliot Prize and the Ted Hughes Award. She won an Eric Gregory Award in 2002 and was shortlisted for the Geoffrey Dearmer Prize in 2001 and the Dylan Thomas Prize in 2008 and 2010. She was one of the five official poets at the 2012 London Olympics. As a playwright, Bird has been shortlisted for the George Devine Award and the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. Her *Selected Poems, Rookie*, was published in May.

Caroline Bird is a unique figure in British poetry, writing and publishing since her teenage years. She has produced six full collections to date, including the Forward Prize winning The Air Year. Bird's poetry is wide-ranging thematically but often marked by a fierce energy, wry humour and a sense of the surreal. Her first collection, Looking Through Letterboxes, was published when she was 15. Bird is also a well-respected playwright and a generous and experienced tutor of writing workshops.

Hannah Lowe

Jane Draycott
- £1,400

Jane Draycott's new collection *The Kingdom* follows seven earlier publications including *The Occupant*, *Over* (T S Eliot Prize shortlist), *Prince Rupert's Drop* (Forward Prize shortlist), *Storms Under the Skin* (Henri Michaux translations), and her award-winning translation of the 14th-century *Pearl*. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Jane Draycott has shown, over a poetic career spanning thirty years, that she is a poet of deep intelligence and subtlety, taking us as she does on poetic journeys towards what are simultaneously mysterious and clear-eyed ways of being in the world. There is something tilting and strange about her work, that offers us lyric as a moment of brilliant arrest and intensity, even reassurance, before sometimes shockingly asking us again to rethink, unravel and renegotiate the world she has just created. She is also recognised as a fine translator and producer of audio work.

Deryn Rees-Jones

The Cholmondeley Award Winners

Greta Stoddart
- £1,400

Greta Stoddart's four books (Anvil, Bloodaxe) have won or been shortlisted for the Geoffrey Faber, Forward, Roehampton and Costa poetry awards. A long radio poem *Who's there?* was BBC Pick of the Week and shortlisted for the 2017 Ted Hughes Award. She was shortlisted for the 2021 Bridport Short Story Award and longlisted for the 2022 BBC Short Story Award. She lives in Devon and teaches for the Poetry School.

Greta Stoddart's poems combine exceptional poise and presence with impressive reach. Capturing the flow of life, they are distinguished by their depth of thought, alertness and sense of the paradoxical. In 2017 she brought together her two paths of theatre and poetry in a radio drama Who's There?, a profound and deeply humane work inspired by visits to a care home for those with advanced dementia. Her recent collection Fool (2022) further demonstrates Greta Stoddart's ability to stretch what poetry can achieve. It confirms her as one of our most accomplished and ambitious poets.

Moniza Alvi

Michael Symmons Roberts
- £1,400

Michael Symmons Roberts trained as a newspaper journalist before joining the BBC in Cardiff as a radio producer in 1989. He moved with the BBC to London, then to Manchester, initially in radio, then as a documentary filmmaker. His last job at the corporation was as Executive Producer and Head of Development for BBC Religion & Ethics, before he left the BBC to focus on writing. His fourth book of poetry, *Corpus*, was the winner of the 2004 Whitbread Poetry Award, and was shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize, the Forward Prize for best collection, and the Griffin International Prize. His Selected Poems was published in 2016. His eighth poetry collection, *Ransom*, was published by Cape in March 2021. He was Born in Lancashire.

A book by Symmons Roberts might explore politics, history and place all with an unstopping, restless mixture of poetic range and ambition; yet each time a book finds its own integrity. At the core of his poetry is an ongoing exploration of ideas: when we read him we take on his interrogations of trust, faith and belief, whether that be in the divine or the body or the complexities of the social world.

Deryn Rees-Jones

The Cholmondeley Award Winners

Jackie Wills
- £1,400

Jackie Wills' most recent poetry collection is *A Friable Earth* (Arc Publications 2019). She's published five earlier collections and was shortlisted for the 1995 TS Eliot prize. She's been a journalist, Royal Literary Fund Fellow and reflects on a lifetime of reading and writing in *On Poetry* (Smith Doorstop 2022). Website: jackiewillspoetry.blogspot.com

Jackie Wills is a very natural, genuine poet of sensitivity, boldness and flair. She has been writing explorative, compassionate, often mesmerising poetry for many years. Her themes are wide-ranging and include women in history, family and ageing, and she has evocative poems set in South Africa, which forms a part of her children's heritage. In poetry that is earthy as well as culturally and spiritually attuned, Wills explores, with grace and verve, what it is to be human. Her exceptional contribution to poetry extends to her wide mentoring, tutoring and her numerous residencies. Her reflective, discerning and practical book On Poetry, demonstrates Wills' wealth of poetic experience and serves as inspiration and encouragement.

Moniza Alvi

Tamar Yoseloff
- £1,400

Tamar Yoseloff's seventh collection, *Belief Systems*, is due from Nine Arches Press in Summer 2024. She's also the author of *Formerly* (with photographs by Vici MacDonald), shortlisted for the Ted Hughes Award, and collaborative editions with artists Linda Karshan and Charlotte Harker respectively. She has taught as a lecturer on the Poetry School / Newcastle University MA in Writing Poetry and for various museums and galleries, including the Royal Academy and the Hayward.

Tammy Yoseloff has been a critical part of the the UK poetry scene for many years, as a writer, organiser, teacher, and in recent years, publisher of Hercules Editions. Her writing moves between narrative and lyric, between autobiographical and biographical, the personal-familial and public. Her poems are particularly noteworthy for their ekphrastic engagement, with many artists, including Jackson Pollock in The City with Horns (2011). Her passion for visual art filters into her teaching at art galleries, including her own beautiful collaboration with the artist Vici MacDonald.

Hannah Lowe

The Eric Gregory Awards

Founded 58 years ago by publisher Dr Eric Lund Gregory

For poets under the age of 30

The total award fund for 2023 is £28,350

Judges: Raymond Antrobus, Eric Ngalle Charles, Wayne Holloway Smith, Sarah Howe, Gwyneth Lewis and Joelle Taylor

It was a huge pleasure to be confronted by a varied and talented list in this year's awards. What this suggested for me was a new cohort of emerging voices with a keen sense of what's at stake in this cultural moment, a willingness to engage with troubling and complex subject areas, and a largely self-reflexive capacity to interrogate the self. My own imagination and proficiency as a reader was stretched again and again.

Wayne Holloway-Smith

Princess Arinola Adegbite
for *Algorithms of Meaning*
- £4,725

Princess Arinola Adegbite is a multi-award-winning artist, poet, musician, actress, and laureled filmmaker from Manchester. She is a winner of Slambassadors 2017, BBC Words First 2020, One Mic Stand 2021, Common Word Going Digital 2021, and Manchester Creative of The Year 2021. Since graduating she has been awarded a Castlefield Gallery Associates prize for her film *Drapetomania* a poetic commentary on race and gender in 2022. Her poems have been published by AUB International Poetry Prize, Poetry Society, New Writing North, Arachne Press, AIU Centre and Sick Festival. She is an active member of Young Identity and has completed African Writers Trust/New Writing North Digital Residency.

The poems in Algorithms are vivid and colourful. It reminds me of someone who creates a list whenever they enter a space. And I very much enjoyed the simplicity and subtlety of the language. The pangs of motherhood, childhood, and growing up always linger, reminding us of a history that was and could be. And how the writer navigates the space between myth and folktale. I moved side to side as I read their work.

Eric Ngalle-Charles

The Eric Gregory Award Winners

Jay Gao
for *Imperium*
- £4,725

Jay Gao is a poet and author of *Imperium* (Carcenet, 2022) plus three poetry pamphlets. He is a Contributing Editor at The White Review. He is a winner of the 2022 Desperate Literature Prize for Short Fiction, the 2021 London Magazine Poetry Prize, and was shortlisted for the 2022 Edwin Morgan Poetry Award. Originally from Edinburgh, Scotland, he earned his MFA at Brown University and is a PhD student at Columbia University in New York City.

Imperium struck me immediately as the work of a poet mind shot through with intellect and cultural capital. Its strength, for me, is found not only in the fashion it reimagines the mythic, but the manner in which it leans away from this aspect and towards a localised, sensitive and emotive personal register.

Wayne Holloway-Smith

Mukahang Limbu
for *Mother of Flip-Flops*
- £4,725

Mukahang Limbu is a Nepalese writer based in Oxford. A three-time Foyle Young Poet, and winner of the Outspoken prize, he has been published in England: *Poems from a School* (Picador, 2018), and *Nascent*. He has been longlisted in the National Poetry Competition and Shortlisted for the Forwards prize.

Mukahang Limbu has become one of my favourite emerging poets of his generation, tender, lyrical, searching, bold, a voice that grows and matures each time it is witnessed. Take it from me, this poet is on his way to literary stardom.

Raymond Antrobus

The Eric Gregory Award Winners

Charlotte Shevchenko Knight

for *food for the dead*
- £4,725

Charlotte Shevchenko Knight is a British-Ukrainian poet. She was a winner of the New Poets Prize in 2021 with her debut pamphlet *Ways of Healing*, published by The Poetry Business (2022). Her work has featured in a range of literary publications including The Poetry Review, Magma, Bath Magg and Poetry Birmingham Literary Journal. Her debut full-length collection *food for the dead* is forthcoming with Jonathan Cape. Shevchenko Knight has an MA in Creative & Life Writing from Goldsmiths University (2022) and is based in York.

I feasted my senses on some incredible writings and wished I could comment on each. food for the dead is autobiographical, and the writer's gifts as a storyteller thread through it: family and familiarity. I was tempted to wear welder's goggles, shielding myself from how the writer played with language. Simply radiating. "Climbing an oak with babies in one arm, grasping branches in the other." I cannot get over this image. The writing filled me with a longing for the home I had concealed within my inner chambers.

Eric Ngalle Charles

Momtaza Mehri

for *Bad Diaspora Poems*
- £4,725

Momtaza Mehri is a poet and independent researcher working across criticism, translation, anti-disciplinary research practices, education, and radio. She is a former Young People's Poet Laureate for London and Frontier-Antioch Fellow at Antioch University (Los Angeles). Her writing has appeared in the likes of POETRY, Granta, Vogue, The Guardian, Bidoun, and The White Review. A former Columnist-in-Residence at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art's Open Space, she has also completed residencies at St. Paul's Cathedral and the British Library.

Mehri pushes language into new shapes in her first full length collection. A valuable guidebook for all those travelling headfirst into the history of the Somali diaspora. Her work examines inherited grief, and how family curves around the violence of migration in a poetic that veers between free verse and prose in a constant search for the right word, the possessive noun.

Joelle Taylor

The Eric Gregory Award Winners

Helen Quah
for *Dog Woman*
- £4,725

Helen Quah (she/her) is a British writer. Her poetry has been published in journals such as *Aesthetica Magazine*, *Bath Magg* and *The Poetry Review*. Her sequence poem 'When I Marry A White Man' won third prize in the Verve Poetry Competition 2022 and she was longlisted for the 2023 National Poetry Competition. Her debut pamphlet *Dog Woman* was published by Out-Spoken Press in June 2022. She currently works as a junior doctor in London.

Quah is a unique writer, a poet with as much width as depth, a 5D kind of writer. Dog Woman is characterised by surreal leaps, and virtuoso upheavals in poetics that lead to the creation of one of the most astounding collections published in recent years. Imagistic and surprising, Dog Woman is inspired by a series of paintings of the same name by the artist Paula Rego. Quah fathoms language as women audition to be themselves and she measures the distance between daughters and mothers. This book is an adventure.

Joelle Taylor

The Betty Trask Prize

Established from a bequest for writers under 35 in 1983

For traditional, romantic, non-experimental first novels

The total prize and award fund for 2023 is £26,250

The prize winner receives £10,000 and the shortlisted authors share a prize fund of £16,200

Judges: Sara Collins, Michael Donkor, and Alex Preston

2023 Shortlist

Paddy Crewe *My Name is Yip* (Doubleday Penguin Random House)

Imogen Crimp *A Very Nice Girl* (Bloomsbury Publishing)

Maddie Mortimer *Maps of our Spectacular Bodies* (Pan Macmillan, Picador)

Daniel Wiles *Mercia's Take* (Swift Press)

No judge of a literary prize will tell you that the process has been easy; I can't think that many have had such a wonderful collection of novels to debate as we did this year. I was struck by how ambitious so many of the books were – again and again there was formal and thematic complexity on show, courageous attempts to give new shape to the novel. Our shortlist is brilliant and wide-ranging, a sign that our literary future is in very good hands.

Alex Preston

The Betty Trask Prize Winner

Daniel Wiles
Mercia's Take
(Swift Press)
- £10,000

Daniel Wiles is from Walsall in the West Midlands. He recently completed the Prose MA at UEA, where he was the recipient of the Booker Prize Foundation Scholarship. *Mercia's Take* is his first novel.

Mercia's Take is an extraordinary debut. Simultaneously intimate and epic, it tracks the journey of one man's voyage through the 19th century Black Country to right injustices both personal and political with a compassion that is never cloying. Wiles is a master stylist: in this debut, each sentence is as dark and tough as the coal our protagonist mines each day. Characters — even those who are seemingly peripheral — have voices that ring with earthy credibility. Wiles' evocation of the landscape is stunning too, often showing the sublimity that can exist alongside struggle. With a thrillingly pacy plot and immaculately crystalline expression, this is a very special debut indeed.

Michael Donkor

Entries for the 2024 Society of Authors' Awards are invited from August 2023

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FOR DEBUT NOVELISTS OVER 60

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