

Jackie Kay wins Scottish Book of the Year

☒ Creative Scotland is delighted to announce that award winning poet and author, Jackie Kay, has been awarded the 2011 Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust Book of the Year, in partnership with Creative Scotland, for her autobiography *Red Dust Road*.

Jackie Kay received her £30,000 prize at a ceremony hosted by Dame Jenni Murray this afternoon at the Edinburgh International Book Festival.

Born in Edinburgh to a Scottish nurse and a Nigerian student, Kay was adopted at birth by a white couple and brought up in Glasgow. *Red Dust Road*, published by Picador, is an autobiographical account of Jackie's search to find her birth parents, a journey that is full of unexpected twists, turns and deep emotions. In an amazing new chapter, a recent Guardian Podcast by Jackie Kay led to her making contact with her birth sisters for the first time.

We spoke with Jackie Kay about winning the award:-

[Interview with Jackie Kay \(mp3\)](#)

On winning the award, Jackie Kay, said:- 'I'm overjoyed to be this year's winner. It's hugely validating and life-changing. It's lovely that the Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust and Creative Scotland recognise how writers need to be supported

to carve out the space to write. *Red Dust Road* isn't just about me; it's about my family in all of its complexities. I happened to write the book, but in a way it feels like my whole family is the winner. The book doesn't just belong to me. And now it seems like it has a whole life of its own in the heart-warming and unexpected way that readers have been finding connections to their own life in it.'

Kay's search for identity inspired her first award-winning poetry collection, *The Adoption Papers* (1991). She then moved on to win awards with her first novel, *Trumpet* (1998), which unfolds a story about an acclaimed jazz trumpeter, Joss Moody, and the revelation of his true sex as a woman after his death.

For the first time in the history of the Awards the public have had a say in choosing the winner with a public vote. Jackie's book secured over half of the public votes and was the unanimous choice of the judges.

Dr Gavin Wallace, Chair of the Judging Panel and Portfolio Manager for Literature, Publishing and Language, said:-'The judges had both the privilege and the challenge of a formidable shortlist: one of the strongest in the Awards' long history. Any one of the four titles would have been a worthy winner. It was finally concluded that Jackie Kay's *Red Dust Road* stood out in an exemplary way in showing one of our most distinctive and original writers at the very height of her powers. Written with an astonishing immediacy and directness of voice and with all Kay's novelistic and poetic skills, it is a courageous, affirmative, and lyrical memoir of the author's search not just for her birth parents, but for self-identity and beyond; anchored throughout by a deeply moving and affirmative celebration of the love between parents and

siblings.'




Andrew Dixon

Andrew Dixon, Chief Executive of Creative Scotland, said:-
'Scotland has a vibrant contemporary literary scene. With more than 40 literature and book festivals from the Borders to Ullapool, Scotland's writers continue to raise Scotland's cultural profile to an international audience. Jackie Kay is one of Scotland's national treasures.

'Our partnership with the Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust is crucial in rewarding Scotland's literary talent. What better place to host these awards than in Edinburgh, the world's first designated UNESCO City of Literature and at the largest book festival in the world.'

John Scott, Chairman of Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust, said:-'This is the third consecutive year that Scottish Mortgage Investment Trust has sponsored these awards. The standard continues to be incredibly high and Jackie Kay is a worthy winner in the eyes of the judges and fully confirmed as such by this year's first ever public vote.'

Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs Fiona  Hyslop MSP said:-'Scotland is a creative nation which boasts both cutting edge gritty writers as well as literary giants of the past. The Scottish Book Awards – one of the highlights of the Edinburgh International Book Festival – showcase the wealth of talent Scotland has to offer. I'd like

to congratulate Jackie Kay on this accolade and the runners up for their fantastic contributions.'

The three runners-up, who each receive £5,000, are:

- Fiction: Leila Aboulela, *Lyrics Alley* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson)
- Poetry: Stewart Conn, *The Breakfast Room* (Bloodaxe)
- First Book: Sue Peebles, *The Death of Lomond Friel* (Vintage)