

# 2016 Saltire Society Book of the Year

*2016 Saltire Society Book of the Year is “..visionary and profound” poetry collection*



A poetry collection by Stirling University Professor Kathleen Jamie has beaten off stiff competition from publications ranging from a true life thriller set in a remote crofting community to an evocative historical account of the Sutherland Clearances and from a first-hand report of life on death row in Pakistan to an exhaustive investigation of early modern Scottish literature to be named 2016 Saltire Society Book of the Year.

*“The Bonniest Companie”* is a collection of 51 poems written during the course of 2014, the year of the referendum on Scottish independence. It is a visionary response to influential local and global forces and addresses Kathleen’s native Scotland and her place within it. The judges described the poems as “utterly relaxed and matter of fact yet profound in their implications”.

Her previous work has been well recognised. *“The Tree House”*, in which Kathleen argues for an engagement of the whole being through a kind of practical earthly spirituality, won The Forward Prize for Best Collection and the Scottish Arts Council Book of the Year Award in 2004. In 2003, her poem, *“Mr and Mrs Scotland are Dead”* was shortlisted for the International Griffin Prize. Her recent collection, *“The Overhaul”*, was shortlisted for the 2012 T. S. Eliot Prize and went on to win the Costa Poetry Award that same year.



Now firmly established as Scotland's most prestigious annual book awards, the Saltire Society Literary Awards are supported by Creative Scotland and celebrate and support literary and academic excellence across six distinct categories. The winner of each individual book award wins a £2,000 cash prize and goes forward to be considered for the Saltire Book of the Year award and an accompanying cash prize of £6,000.

Kathleen's extraordinary collection was also named 2016 Saltire Society Scottish Poetry Book of the Year, winning what judges described as an exceptionally strong category with a shortlist that also included works by well-established, award-winning poets Don Paterson, John Glenday, Pàdraig MacAoidh / Peter Mackay, J.O. Morgan and Vicki Husband.

Other award winners this year included *Set Adrift Upon the World*, James Hunter's evocative account of the Sutherland clearances and winner of the History Book of the Year award; *Trials*, an examination of justice and injustice from the perspective of inmates on Pakistan's death row by Isabel Buchanan and joint winner of the First Book of the Year award alongside *Expecting*, an innovative and thought provoking look at

pregnancy by Edinburgh-based freelance journalist Chitra Ramswamy; Research Book of the Year *The Literary Culture of Early Modern Scotland* by Dutch author Sebastiaan Verweij ; Non-Fiction Book of the Year *Other People's Money*, a critical examination of the modern finance industry by academic and industry insider John Kay; and *His Bloody Project*, Graeme Macrae Burnet's engrossing novel about the true 19<sup>th</sup> Century case of a multiple murder in a remote crofting community and winner of the Fiction Book of the Year award.

Kathleen Jamie collected both awards at a special ceremony at the Central Hall in Edinburgh on Thursday evening (24 November 2016).

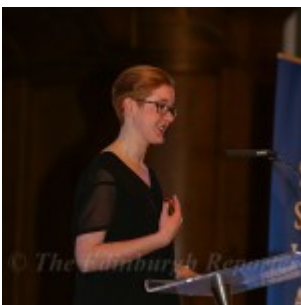


Also announced at the awards ceremony was the winner of the 2016 Saltire Publisher of the Year Award, which went to Edinburgh based Floris Books. New for 2016, the winner of the Saltire Emerging Publisher of the Year Award was also announced as Leah McDowell, Design and Production Manager at Floris Books.

As part of the Saltire Society's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, this year's Publisher of the Year was awarded a fully funded placement on the renowned Yale Publishing Course, a week-long intensive classroom-based course hosted on the beautiful and historic Yale University Campus in New Haven, Connecticut in the USA.

Also in celebration of the Saltire Society's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the winners of a series of bursaries and awards were announced as part of this year's Saltire Literary Awards ceremony. Daniel Shand, a student at the University of Edinburgh, won the Saltire Society International Travel Bursary supported by the British Council Scotland, which will enable him to travel to Berlin to research European history for his next novel through visits to the Museum of European Cultures, as well as the Stasi Museum, Jewish Museum, and the Topography of Terror.

Writer Annie George won this year's Inspiring Scotland Bursary for a BAME writer, made in partnership with the Scottish Book Trust. Craig Ronald Lamont, a student at the University of Glasgow, won this year's Ross Roy Medal and UCSL Award for his thesis, '*Georgian Glasgow: the city remembered through literature, objects, and cultural memory theory*'.





Commenting on winning the Saltire Book of the Year Award, Kathleen Jamie said:

“I’m delighted that *The Bonniest Companie* has been named ‘Scottish Poetry Book of the Year’, but also a bit embarrassed. It was a terrifically strong shortlist, any of us could have won. Scotland makes very good poets – a fact that’s still not acknowledged as it ought to be. I’m grateful to the judges. It couldn’t have been an easy decision.”

Executive Director of the Saltire Society Jim Tough said:

“This has been another terrific year for the Saltire Literary Awards and an extra special one as we celebrate our 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Every one of the individual book awards were hotly contested, making the judges’ decision a particularly challenging one. The same was also true of this year’s Publisher of the Year Award and new for this year, the Emerging Publisher of the Year Award.





“My congratulations to all of the winners and my heartfelt thanks to the judging panel and to all of our partners and supporters who helped to make the 2016 Saltire Literary Awards such a resounding success. We are proud to have seen these awards grow to embrace every aspect of literary Scotland; the emerging and the established, the academic and the poetic, fiction, non-fiction and publishing. Excellence is the common thread, built on the integrity and freely given commitment of our expert panels.”

Jenny Niven, Head of Literature, Languages and Publishing at Creative Scotland, commented:

“Huge congratulations to all of the shortlisted authors, category winners and to Kathleen Jamie on winning the 2016 Saltire Book of the Year. A visionary and moving response to a year charged with energy, passion and politics. It was a great pleasure to be part of the judging panel for the 2016 Saltire Society Literary Awards and to read through this impressively diverse list of books. Awards such as this are important as they offer an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the outstanding quality and range of literature in Scotland and raise the national and international profile of talented authors.”