

Scottish Book Trust names ten recipients of the New Writers Award

Half of those being given the tenth annual New Writers Award by Scottish Book Trust today are Edinburgh authors. Alice Tarbuck, Bobby Finn, Angela Drinnan, Ross McCleary and Rachel Rankin will all get financial support to help them publish their first books.

The New Writers Awards provide a selection of talented writers who have not yet published a full length book or collection with financial support, to enable them to concentrate on developing their work, as well as professional guidance to help them move towards publication. Former awardees include P.M. Freestone, whose young adult novel *Shadowscents: The Darkest Bloom* (Scholastic) will be published in February 2019, and Nadine Aisha Jassat, whose poetry collection *Let Me Tell You This* (404 Ink) will be published in March 2019.

Each of the 10 recipients will receive a £2,000 cash award and support tailored to their needs including mentoring from writers and industry professionals, training opportunities, and the platform to showcase their work to publishers and agents. The awards also include the offer of a week-long writing retreat at Moniack Mhor. The retreat provides time, space and the freedom to create new work in idyllic surroundings.

The Edinburgh writers getting an award

Alice Tarbuck is a poet living in Stockbridge. Her first pamphlet, *Grid*, was published by Sad Press in 2018. Her work has been commissioned by Durham Literary Festival, the Sheffield Post Office Gallery, the University of Edinburgh, Scottish PEN, and Timespan in Helmsdale. She is part of 12, an Edinburgh women's poetry collective.

Bobby Finn from Polwarth is a radio producer, and his work has included documentaries for BBC World Service on the Russian comedy scene, the origins of surfing in Hawaii and the rise of African Hip Hop. He has written radio scripts for some of the biggest names in comedy including Rich Hall, Miles Jupp and Mel Giedroyc. He was shortlisted for the Scottish Book Trust's New Writers Award in 2016.

Angela Drinnan has written two novels and won a prize in a Chapter One poetry competition in 2008. Her interest in peoples' stories led her to train first as a Clinical Psychologist then as a Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist. She works in the NHS and private practice in Edinburgh. Her own life story continues to surprise her – she recently moved back to Edinburgh after almost twenty years in London.

Rachel Rankin is a poet from Coatbridge, currently based in Gorgie, where she works both as a tour-guide and as a tutor in Scandinavian Studies at the University of Edinburgh. She was chosen for the National Centre for Writing's Emerging Translator Mentorship, where she is currently being mentored by renowned translator Don Bartlett in Norwegian to English literary translation. Rachel has also taken part in the inaugural Emerging Critics Mentoring Programme organised by

the Scottish Review of Books. She has received a Dewar Arts Award and was shortlisted for the Jane Martin Poetry Prize.

Ross McCleary, also based in Gorgie, holds a degree in investigative journalism and has had work published in a number of places in print and online including 404 Ink, Litro, and Structo. In March 2018 he spent a month in Finland at Arteles Creative Centre as part of a residency programme. Ross also helps run Inky Fingers, a monthly spoken word open mic night, and does Poetry Shows with Andrew Blair under the name Poetry AF. Their shows and work have been nominated for a number of Saboteur Awards.

The panel, who read over 450 submissions, included Scots Scribe Michael Dempster and award-winning authors Leila Aboulela and David Kennan. Poet Bill Herbert and Hannah Lavery, Learning & Engagement Co-ordinator at the Scottish Poetry Library, judged the poetry submissions. Award-winning authors Cathy Forde and Debi Gliori sat on the Children and Young Adult panel.

The Gaelic Books Council provides two additional places on the programme, which will support two New Gaelic Writers each year. These awards will be announced shortly.

Marc Lambert, CEO of Scottish Book Trust, said: “Congratulations to our ten New Writers Awardees, who join the likes of Graeme Macrae Burnet, Helen Sedgwick and Kirsty Logan. We’re delighted to see the applications increase year on year, and it’s wonderful to be celebrating a milestone ten years of the New Writers Awards. All of us at Scottish Book Trust wish the new awardees the best of luck with their projects.”

Alan Bett, Head of Literature, Languages and Publishing, Creative Scotland, said: “Scottish Book Trust’s New Writers Awards are always a reason for readers to celebrate, due to their role in delivering now-established authors such as

Claire Askew and Malachy Tallack into print. Writer development opportunities can never be underestimated. The tailored approach here, alongside the public platform, helps build skills, confidence and visibility, ensuring Scotland's most exciting talent in poetry and prose reach our nation's bookshelves."



Alice Tarbuck

Alice Tarbuck, New Writers Awardee 2019, said:“I am delighted and grateful to have been awarded a New Writer's Award. I have always admired the work of previous winners, and am excited to be given the time and resources to focus on my poetry.”



Bobby Finn

Bobby Finn, New Writers Awardee 2019, said:“It may seem a little over-dramatic to call this opportunity life-changing but that's what this award genuinely is. Not because it is the promise of fame and riches but because it provides real affirmation and recognition of all the endless hours of hopeful scribbling that we nascent writers do. Thanks be to Scottish Book Trust.”



Angela Drinnan

Angela Drinnan, New Writers Awardee 2019, said:“I am delighted and extremely grateful to be given this fantastic opportunity by Scottish Book Trust. Writing can be an insular business and I am looking forward to connecting with other writers.”



Rachel Rankin

Rachel Rankin, New Writers Awardee 2019, said:“I am absolutely overwhelmed. To have my writing validated in this way is – ironically – indescribable, and I am just so excited for the year ahead. Thank you so much to Scottish Book Trust for this incredible opportunity!”



Ross McCleary

Ross McCleary, New Writers Awardee 2019, said:“I still can’t believe it. It’s an incredible honour and a real confidence boost. I’m looking forward to an amazing year and getting stuck into my novel with renewed energy.”

The New Writers Showcase, a celebration of work by the New Writers Awardees of 2018, will be held on 24 January at The Jam House in Edinburgh.

The event is an opportunity to hear some of the most exciting new talent in Scotland perform their work, as last year's awardees mark the end of their year. More details and ticket information can be found [here](#).

Scottish Book Trust, the national charity transforming lives through reading and writing, has supported over 100 creative individuals through the awards.