

James Tait Black prizes – shortlist announced

The shortlist for Britain's longest-running book awards was announced today by the University of Edinburgh which has presented them since 1919.

The prizes are for the best work of fiction and biography published in the last year, and the awards are judged by literature scholars and students.

The contenders include a range of work from a short story collection, a coming of age journey, drama amid the climate emergency and a trip back in time to the interwar years.

Authors have links to America, Australia, England, Ireland, Mauritius, Scotland and Uganda. The stories take readers to New York, Haiti and a fictitious artistic town in central Europe.

Both prizes offer £10,000 to each writer of the winning fiction work and the biography.

The four books shortlisted for the fiction prize are: *Alligator & Other Stories* (Picador) By Dima Alzayat; *The First Woman* (Oneworld) by Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi; *A Children's Bible* (W.W. Norton) by Lydia Millet; and *Lote* (Jacaranda) by Shola von Reinhold.

The four biographies shortlisted for the prize are: *The Warrior, the Voyager, and the Artist: Three Lives in an Age of Empire* (Yale) by Kate Fullagar; *A Ghost in the Throat* (Tramp

Press) by Doireann Ní Ghríofa; *Black Spartacus: The Epic Life of Toussaint Louverture* (Allen Lane) by Sudhir Hazareesingh; and *Recollections of My Non-Existence* (Granta) by Rebecca Solnit.

The two winners will be announced in August at the Edinburgh International Book Festival at its new home at the Edinburgh College of Art.

Fiction judge, Dr Benjamin Bateman said: “These books represent the very best qualities of global anglophone literature—epic, experimental, and engaged with pressing concerns both political and planetary.”

Biography judge, Dr Simon Cooke said: “These bold, generous, and radiant books expand the reach of life-writing in exhilarating ways: alive to the stakes of shaping life through form and voice, each is uniquely and profoundly attuned to the ways individual lives can resonate powerfully with other lives, other places, other times.”

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/events/james-tait-black>

