

# Edinburgh authors recognised in Scottish Book Trust awards

**Four Edinburgh authors are recognised by Scottish Book Trust, the national charity changing lives with reading and writing, in their 2023 New Writers Awards.**

The authors will receive a prestigious year-long writer development programme which includes mentorship, a bursary, and opportunities to showcase work to publishing industry professionals.

The four are: young adult fiction writer Sonali Misra, children's writer Henry Coles, Gaelic poet Robbie MacLeòid and poet Medha Singh.

There are in total 11 writers on this year's programme, including two writing in the Scots language and two in Gaelic. This year also marks the tenth anniversary of the Callan Gordon Award, a place on the programme which is awarded in memory of Callan Gordon, a young Scottish writer, and funded by the Gordon family.

Previous awardees include Booker Prize winner Graeme Macrae Burnet, bestselling author of *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* Gail Honeyman; and acclaimed writers Kirstin Innes, Rachelle Atella and Sarah Smith.

Marc Lambert, CEO of Scottish Book Trust, said: "This year's cohort of New Writers Awardees showcase some of the best new writing talent in Scotland. We're excited to support them on

the next stage of their writing journeys to help them develop and hone their skills further.”

Alan Bett, Head of Literature & Publishing at Creative Scotland, said: “Scottish Book Trust’s New Writers Awards continues to launch fresh and inspiring voices into professional writing, supporting them every step of the way. “We’re excited to see the future of Scottish literature emerge from this list and, eventually, onto bookshop shelves. The list of successful authors and poets to have come through New Writers is testament to the success of the programme, helping them develop their creative work and navigate the professional challenges of these early career stages. We wish them all success.”

**Henry Coles**



Henry Coles PHOTO Rob McDougall  
He said: "I'm both amazed and honoured to have been selected by Scottish Book Trust as an awardee and am looking forward to

working with them and meeting other writers.”

**Biography:** ‘Henry grew up in a small village in Yorkshire, but moved to Scotland over 20 years ago and now lives in Edinburgh with his partner and children. After dropping out of both a chemistry degree and a PhD in powder metallurgy, he became a computer programmer and an accidental expert in obscure software testing techniques.

Although he’d always wanted to write, Henry didn’t actually sit down and try until his forties. Inspired by the books he’d read to his children, he decided to try and create something they’d enjoy.

His first completed book, *The Cipher Engines* was shortlisted for the Times Chicken House IET150 prize and Well’s Book for Children competitions. His second, *The Traitor’s Moon*, was long listed for the Bath and WriteMentor children’s novel awards

Henry is currently working on a third middle grade novel full of pirates, democracy, and whales.’

Twitter: @\_pitest

**Medha Singh**



Medha Singh PHOTO Rob McDougall

She said: “I am grateful to Scottish Book Trust and the judges of the New Writers Award for choosing my entry among the horde of talented writers I know to freckle the ebullient and plentiful world of Scottish arts and letters.”

**Biography:** ‘Medha Singh is a poet, translator, and editor. She is editor of Berfrois, London. She has published a work of translation, a collection of love letters that she translated from the French, penned by Indian modernist painter Sayed Haider Raza during his time in France, *I Will Bring My Time: Love Letters* by S.H. Raza (Vadehra Art Gallery, 2020). Her work has appeared in *Almost Island*, *Hotel*, *Berfrois*, *Interpret*, *3:AM*, *Indian Quarterly*, *The Bombay Literary Magazine*, *Poetry at Sangam*, *The Charles River Journal* among others. Her work has been anthologized in *Singing in the Dark* (Penguin, 2020), *The Gollancz Book of South Asian Science Fiction* (Hachette, 2021), *Contemporary Indian Poetry* by Younger Indians (Sahitya Akademi, 2020), *Best Indian Poetry 2018* (RLFPA editions), *Divining Dante* (Recent Work Press,

2021) Future Library: Contemporary Indian Writing (Red Hen Press, 2022), Converse: Contemporary English Poetry by Indians (Penguin Random House, 2022); The Best Asian Poetry (Kitaab, 2022). Her work has been translated into Hindi, Spanish and French. Her interviews have appeared on the website of The Pablo Neruda Foundation, Chile; NER0books, Boston; POV, Denmark, Queen Mob's Teahouse, London and JCAM, Massachusetts. among others. Medha was longlisted for the Toto Funds the Arts Awards (India) in 2019 and 2020. She took her MSc in Creative Writing from the Uni of Edinburgh. Her collection of poems is forthcoming.'

Twitter: @medhawrites | Instagram: @medha.s\_\_

## **Robbie MacLeòid**



Robbie MacLeòid PHOTO Rob McDougall

He said: "I am absolutely thrilled to be joining the ranks of Gaelic New Writers awardees. I've long been a fan of the New Writers Awards and look forward to finding out who has won them every year. It is an honour to be amongst them this time!'

**Biography:** Robbie MacLeòid is a poet and writer, who creates in English and Scottish Gaelic. He was the poet-in-residence for Scotland's international poetry festival, StAnza, in 2020. Over the course of the pandemic, he was commissioned by various organisations such as the University of Glasgow, and StAnza, to create poetry for them.

In 2022, the manuscript for his first poetry collection, 'Am Measg Luaithrean Beò', won Best Unpublished Manuscript at the Gaelic Literature Awards. The same collection was also Highly Commended in the Edwin Morgan Poetry Award in the same year. You can find his work in Gutter, 404 Ink, New Writing Scotland, and STEALL, among other places.

Robbie has worked in numerous forms over the years, from songwriting, to prose, to poetry, to drama, and even the odd bit of video game writing. He enjoys translating, and, with backing from the Edwin Morgan Trust, put together a zine of Gaelic translations of Edwin Morgan's poetry. In his work he explores queerness, anti-colonialism, feminism, and play.'

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**Sonali Misra**



Sonali Misra PHOTO Rob McDougall

She said: "I got the news about winning the Award on a tough day, one I spent at hospital with my father, who's undergoing



chemotherapy in India. He knows I've been applying to this Award for a couple years, and he's proud of my writing but also my perseverance. I won't win anything if I never apply, and I'm thrilled my efforts paid off."

**Biography:** 'Sonali Misra's life revolves around stories. She's been a reader, performer, student of literature and creative writing, editor and product manager in the publishing industry, literary magazine co-founder, PhD Researcher in publishing, and author.

Born and raised in Delhi, India, Sonali's short prose has appeared in Scottish, Canadian and Indian anthologies. Her nonfiction book, *21 Fantastic Failures: and what their stories teach us*, was published in 2020. She's won writing awards at University, a spot on Gothenburg's UNESCO City of Literature writing residency, and The National Library of Scotland's Fresh Ink prize. Due to the latter, her personal essay was added to the Library archives. It was also shortlisted for the Anne Brown Prize by Wigtown Book Festival and the BBC.

Supporting others in the literature sector is key for Sonali. She's done so as the Co-founder of The Selkie Publications CIC, an international literary magazine that publishes and promotes minoritised voices, and formerly as the Co-chair of the Society of Young Publishers (SYP) Scotland and member of the Writers' Advisory Group of Literature Alliance Scotland.

Currently completing her YA political adventure fantasy novel *Aasra*, the first in a trilogy, Sonali aims to showcase fun fast-paced yet important Indian genre writing on the international stage.'

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