



**RELEASE SEPTEMBER 13, 2016
9:30 a.m. EDT**

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2016 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS LONGLIST FOR POETRY

The ten contenders for the National Book Award for Poetry.

New York, NY (September 13, 2016) – The National Book Foundation today announced the Longlist for the 2016 National Book Award for Poetry. Finalists will be revealed on October 13.

Among the established, mid-career, and emerging poets on this year’s Longlist, two are debut collections, three are former National Book Award Finalists, one is a Pulitzer Prize Winner, and two are former Poet Laureates of the United States.

Peter Gizzi’s *Archeophonics* experiments with repeated phrases and words to explore the archeology of lost sound.

Three of the longlisted collections address themes of mortality: *The Selected Poems of Donald Hall* by **Donald Hall**, who was a poetry finalist twice for the National Book Award and served as poet laureate of the United States from 2006 to 2007; *World of Made and Unmade* by **Jean Mead**, a recipient of the Whiting Writers’ Award; *The Abridged History of Rainfall* by **Jay Hopler**, the 2005 winner of the Yale Younger Poet’s Prize.

Rita Dove's *Collected Poems 1974–2004*, addresses love, politics, and civil rights through four decades of her work. In **Daniel Borzutky**'s *The Performance of Becoming Human*, the poems examine violence, politics, and abuse by governments on its citizens.

Poets with debut collections are **Donika Kelly** and **Solmaz Sharif**. Kelly, a Cave Canem fellow uses beasts as metaphor to address identity in *Bestiary*, while Sharif, of Iranian descent, builds poems from a dictionary of military phrases that respond to her life in the United States after her family was displaced by conflict in *Look*.

In **Monica Youn**'s *Blackacre*, the far-ranging collection moves the reader between lyric memoir, poetic musings, and meditations on language and power.

Collected and previously uncollected poems in **Kevin Young**'s *Blue Laws*, explore death, fatherhood, music and the Black experience.

Publishers submitted a total of 230 books for the 2016 National Book Award for Poetry. The judges are Mark Bibbins, Jericho Brown, Katie Ford, Joy Harjo (Chair), and Tree Swenson. These distinguished judges were given the charge of selecting what they deem to be the best books of the year. Their decisions are made independently of the National Book Foundation staff and Board of Directors; deliberations are strictly confidential. To be eligible for a 2016 National Book Award, a book must have been written by a US citizen and published in the United States between December 1, 2015 and November 30, 2016.

The remaining Longlists for the Nonfiction and Fiction categories will be revealed exclusively at newyorker.com at 9 a.m. EDT as follows: Nonfiction on September 14 and Fiction on September 15.

The National Book Award Finalists will be announced on October 13, and the Winners at the invitation-only National Book Awards Ceremony and Benefit Dinner on November 16 in New York City.

2016 Longlist for Poetry:

Daniel Borzutzky, *The Performance of Becoming Human*
Brooklyn Arts Press

Rita Dove, *Collected Poems 1974 – 2004*
W. W. Norton & Company

Peter Gizzi, *Archeophonics*
Wesleyan University Press

Donald Hall, *The Selected Poems of Donald Hall*
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Jay Hopler, *The Abridged History of Rainfall*
McSweeney's

Donika Kelly, *Bestiary*
Graywolf Press

Jean Mead, *World of Made and Unmade*
Alice James Books

Solmaz Sharif, *Look*
Graywolf Press

Monica Youn, *Blackacre*
Graywolf Press

Kevin Young, *Blue Laws*
Alfred A. Knopf

Poet biographies:

Daniel Borzutzky's books and chapbooks include, among others, *In the Murmurs of the Rotten Carcass Economy*, *Bedtime Stories for the End of the World!*, *Data Bodies*, *The Book of Interfering Bodies*, and *The Ecstasy of Capitulation*. He has translated Raúl Zurita's *The Country of Planks*, and *Song for His Disappeared Love*, and Jaime Luis Huenún's *Port Trakl* (2008). His

work has been supported by the Illinois Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Pen/Heim Translation Fund. He lives in Chicago.

Rita Dove is the recipient of many honors, including the Pulitzer Prize for her book *Thomas and Beulah*, and the Fulbright Lifetime Achievement Medal. She served as the Library of Congress Poet Laureate Consultant. A member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, she is a Commonwealth Professor of English at the University of Virginia.

Peter Gizzi is the author of seven collections of poetry including *Threshold Songs* and *In Defense of Nothing: Selected Poems, 1987-2011*, and *The Outernationale*. He has also published several limited-edition chapbooks, folios, and artist books. His work has been widely anthologized and translated into numerous languages. He works at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Donald Hall was twice a National Book Award Finalist in Poetry: in 1956 for *Exiles and Marriages* and in 1993 for *The Museum of Clear Ideas*. He was also a National Book Award Finalist in Nonfiction in 1979 for *Remembering Poets*. Hall served as poet laureate of the United States from 2006 to 2007, is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and recipient of the National Medal of Arts, awarded by President Obama.

Jay Hopley's poetry, essays, and translations have appeared, or are forthcoming, in numerous magazines and journals including *American Poetry Review*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The New Republic*, *The New Yorker*, and *Slate*. Louise Glück chose his book of poems, *Green Squall* as the winner of the 2005 Yale Series of Younger Poets Award. He has been the recipient of a Residency Fellowship from the Lannan Foundation, a Whiting Writers' Award, and a Rome Fellowship in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters/the American Academy in Rome.

Donika Kelly's poems have appeared in various journals including *West Branch*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, and *Tupelo Quarterly*. *Bestiary* is Kelly's first collection of poetry and was selected by Nikky Finney for the 2015 Cave Canem Poetry Prize

Jean Mead is the author of three previous collections of poetry. Her poems have been published widely in anthologies and journals and she is the recipient of a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, a Whiting Writers' Award, and a Lannan Fellowship. She teaches at the Drew University low-residency MFA program in Poetry and Poetry in Translation.

Solmaz Sharif has published poetry in the *New Republic* and *Poetry*, and has received a Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award and a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. She is currently a Jones Lecturer at Stanford University. *Look* is her first collection of poetry. solmazsharif.com

Monica Youn is the author of two previous collections, *Ignatz*, which was a finalist for the National Book Award in 2010, and *Barter*. She is also a former lawyer who currently teaches writing at Princeton University and in the low-residency MFA program at Warren Wilson College.

Kevin Young is the author of ten previous books of poetry and prose including *Jelly Roll: a blues*, a 2003 poetry finalist for both the National Book Award and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Award; *Book of Hours*, a 2015 finalist for the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award and winner of the 2015 Lenore Marshall Prize for Poetry from the Academy of American Poets; and *Ardency: A Chronicle of the Amistad Rebels*. Young's nonfiction book *The Grey Album: On the Blackness of Blackness* won the Graywolf Press Nonfiction Prize, the PEN Open Book Award, and was a finalist for the 2013 National Book Critics Circle Award for criticism. He is the editor of several collections, including *The Collected Poems of Lucille Clifton, 1965-2010* and *The Hungry Ear: Poems of Food and Drink*.

2016 Judges for Poetry:

Mark Bibbins is the author of three poetry collections, most recently, *They Don't Kill You Because They're Hungry, They Kill You Because They're Full* (Copper Canyon Press), named one of *Publishers Weekly's* best books of 2014. He has received a New York Foundation for the

Arts fellowship and a Lambda Literary Award. Bibbins teaches in the graduate writing programs of The New School and Columbia University, and edits the poetry section of *The Awl*.

Jericho Brown is the recipient of a Whiting Writers Award and fellowships from the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University and the National Endowment for the Arts. His poems have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Best American Poetry*. His first book, *Please*, won the American Book Award, and his second book, *The New Testament*, won the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, the Thom Gunn Award, and was named one of the best books of the year by *Library Journal*, *Coldfront*, and the Academy of American Poets. He is an associate professor in English and creative writing at Emory University in Atlanta.

Katie Ford is the author of *Deposition*, *Colosseum*, and *Blood Lyrics*, which was a finalist for the LA Times Book Prize and the Rilke Prize. *Colosseum* was named among the “Best Books of 2008” by *Publishers Weekly* and the *Virginia Quarterly Review* and led to a Lannan Literary Fellowship and the Larry Levis Prize. *The New Yorker*, *Poetry Magazine*, *The Paris Review*, and *The American Poetry Review* have published her poems, and her work is forthcoming in *The Norton Introduction to Literature*. Her fourth book is forthcoming from Graywolf Press in 2017. Ford teaches at the University of California, Riverside, where she directs the MFA Program in Creative Writing & Writing for the Performing Arts.

Joy Harjo (*Chair*) is an acclaimed poet, musician, writer and performer. Her books of award-winning poetry include her newest *Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings*. Her memoir *Crazy Brave* won the PEN USA Literary Award for Creative Nonfiction. She is the recipient of the Wallace Stevens Award from the Academy of American Poets, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. She is at work on a musical, an album of music, and a second memoir. She holds a Chair of Excellence in Creative Writing at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Tree Swenson has been the executive director of Hugo House since early 2012. She previously spent ten years as executive director of the Academy of American Poets in New York, where she launched the Poem-a-Day program and started the annual Poetry & the Creative Mind event at Lincoln Center. Swenson was the executive director and publisher at Copper Canyon Press, which she co-founded, for twenty years. The Press produced books from poets including Nobel Laureates and Pulitzer Prize–winners, and garnered numerous national awards. She also served

as director of programs at the Massachusetts Cultural Council and is a former board president of the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP). She holds an MPA degree from the Kennedy School at Harvard.

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***The National Book Foundation's mission** is to celebrate the best of American literature, to expand its audience, and to enhance the cultural value of good writing in America. In addition to the National Book Awards, for which it is best known, the Foundation's programs include **5 Under 35**, a celebration of emerging fiction writers selected by former National Book Award Finalists and Winners; the **National Book Awards Teen Press Conference**, an opportunity for New York City students to interview the current National Book Award Finalists in Young People's Literature; **NBA on Campus**, a partnership that brings National Book Award authors to colleges across the country; the **Innovations in Reading Prize**, awarded to individuals and institutions that have developed innovative means of creating and sustaining a lifelong love of reading; and **BookUp**, a writer-led, after-school reading program for middle-school students.*

***The National Book Award** is one of the nation's most prestigious literary prizes and has a stellar record of identifying and rewarding quality writing. In 1950, William Carlos Williams was the first Winner in Poetry, the following year William Faulkner was honored in Fiction, and so on through the years. Many previous Winners of a National Book Award are now firmly established in the canon of American literature, such as Sherman Alexie, Louise Erdrich, Jonathan Franzen, Denis Johnson, James McBride, Joyce Carol Oates, and Adrienne Rich.*