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2018 Texas Institute of Letters Prize Winners Announced

Jan Reid’s novel of international intrigue, Sins of the Younger Sons, is winner of the top fiction award in Texas Institute of Letters' competition for works published in 2017. Sins of the Younger Sons follows a covert operative from Texas caught up in the Basque separatist movement in Spain, and it has drawn laudatory comparisons to the best novels of Graham Greene and Robert Stone. Reid’s previous novel, Comanche Sundown, also won the TIL’s top fiction prize.

Reid’s award, along with the TIL’s other major literary prizes — including the Lifetime Achievement Award to internationally acclaimed author, Sandra Cisneros, will be presented at the 82nd meeting of the Institute in San Antonio on April 6-7.

The Texas Institute of Letters is a nonprofit honor society founded in 1936 to celebrate Texas literature and recognize distinctive literary achievement. The TIL’s elected membership consists of the state’s most respected writers – including winners of the Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award, and MacArthur “Genius” grants.

More than $20,000 in prize money will be presented by the TIL in San Antonio to writers in the categories of fiction, non-fiction, history, poetry, children’s and young adult literature, translation, and book design. The competition is limited to those who have lived in the state for at least two years or have entries pertaining to Texas subjects.

Among the prize winners this year are new TIL members Sasha Pimentel (Smith Award for Best Book of Poetry) and Bret Anthony Johnston (Cattarulla Award for Best Short Story.) Author Roger D. Hodge has won the major nonfiction prize for Texas Blood and Texas Observer Managing Editor Rose Cahalan will receive the Shrake Award for Short Nonfiction. Attached is a complete list of honorees.
2018 TIL Award Winners & Finalists (for works published in 2017)

Jesse H. Jones Award for Best Work of Fiction
Winner: Jan Reid, Sins of the Younger Sons.

Carr P. Collins Award for Best Book of Nonfiction
Winner: Roger D. Hodge, Texas Blood: Seven Generations Among the Outlaws, Ranchers, Indians, Missionaries, Soldiers, and Smugglers of the Borderlands.
Finalists: Nate Blakeslee, American Wolf. / Melissa del Bosque, Bloodlines.

Ramirez Family Award for Most Significant Scholarly Book
Winner: Jerry D. Thompson, Tejano Tiger: José de los Santos Benavides and the Texas-Mexico Borderlands, 1823-1891.
Finalists: Jason A. Gillmer, Slavery and Freedom in Texas. / Patricia Bernstein, Ten Dollars to Hate: The Texas Man Who Fought the Klan.

Helen C. Smith Award for Best Book of Poetry
Winner: Sasha Pimentel, For Want of Water: and other poems.
Finalists: Betty Adcock, Rough Fugue. / Bruce Bond, Blackout Starlight.

Sergio Troncoso Award for Best Work of First Fiction
Winner: Chanelle Benz, The Man Who Shot Out My Eye is Dead.

TIL Award for First Book of Poetry
Winner: Vanessa Villarreal, Beast Meridian.
Finalists, Frances Schenkkan, Mr. Stevens’ Secretary. / Laura Guidry, Between Two Gardens.

Kay Cattarulla Award for Best Short Story
Winner: Bret Anthony Johnston, "Miss McElroy."
Finalists: Lisa Bubert, "Formation." / Jerry Whitus, "The Woman at the Galvez."

Edwin "Bud" Shrake Award for Short Nonfiction
Winner: Rose Cahalan, “Ride Like a Girl” in the Texas Observer.
Finalists: Sergio Troncoso, “Passing Ambition” (We Wear the Mask: Fifteen True Stories of Passing in America. / Skip Hollandsworth, “Love and Loss on the Plains” (Texas Monthly.)
JEAN FLYNN AWARD FOR BEST CHILDREN’S BOOK
Winner: Michael Merschel, Revenge of the Star Survivors.
Runner-up: Christina Soontornvat, In a Dark Land.

H-E-B AWARD FOR BEST YOUNG ADULT BOOK
Winner: Francisco X. Stork, Disappeared.

DENTON RECORD-CHRONICLE AWARD FOR BEST CHILDREN’S PICTURE BOOK
Winner: Xelena González and Adriana M. García, All around Us.

SOEURETTE DIEHL FRASER AWARD FOR BEST TRANSLATION OF A BOOK
Winner: Philip Boehm, translator of Chasing the King of Hearts, by Hanna Krall.
Runner-up: Shelby Vincent, translator of Heavens on Earth, by Carmen Boullosa.

FRED WHITEHEAD AWARD FOR BEST DESIGN OF A TRADE BOOK
Winner: Mary Ann Jacob, designer. The Nueces River, Rio Escondido (Texas A&M University Press.)

NEW TIL MEMBERS INDUCTED

In addition to honoring the winners of these major awards, the TIL will recognize its new members elected into the Institute: Fiction writers Daniel Chacón (El Paso), Bret Anthony Johnston (Corpus Christi/Austin), Guadalupe Garcia McCall (Eagle Pass/San Antonio), José Skinner (Puerto Rico, Rio Grande Valley.) Nonfiction authors Marcia Hatfield Daudistel (El Paso), Michael Hurd (The Woodlands), Mary Beth Rogers (Dallas.) Screenwriter-director Richard Linklater. Filmmaker-playwright Severo Perez (San Antonio/Los Angeles.) Playwrights Kirk Lynn (Austin) and Ted Shine (Dallas.) Journalist Alfredo Corchado (Dallas/Mexico City.) Singer-songwriter Willie Nelson. Poets Katherine Hoerth (Beaumont), Sheryl Luna (El Paso/Denver), Sasha Pimentel (Phillipines/El Paso), José Antonio Rodríguez (Rio Grande Valley), Steven Schneider (Rio Grande Valley), Christian Wiman (Snyder, New Haven, CT)

For more information about the Texas Institute of Letters, visit its website at: www.texasinstituteofletters.org