

Gordon Burn Prize 2016 shortlist announced

The shortlist is announced today for the Gordon Burn Prize 2016, which champions a fresh and fearless approach to writing. The literary prize was founded in 2012 to celebrate the legacy of the late Gordon Burn.

Gordon Burn wrote across a wide range of subjects, from celebrity to serial killers and politics to contemporary art, including the novels *Fullalove* and *Born Yesterday: The News as Novel*, and non-fiction including *Happy Like Murderers: The Story of Fred and Rosemary West*; *Best and Edwards: Football, Fame and Oblivion* and *Sex & Violence, Death & Silence; Encounters with recent art*.

Gordon's work was precise and rigorous, while often blurring the line between fact and fiction. The Gordon Burn Prize, run in partnership by the Gordon Burn Trust, New Writing North, Faber & Faber and Durham Book Festival, seeks to celebrate the writing of those whose work follows in his footsteps.

The judges of the 2016 prize, the novelists Jenn Ashworth and William Boyd, journalist and writer Rachel Cooke, and the artist and author Harland Miller, have selected the six shortlisted titles.

The shortlist for the Gordon Burn Prize 2016 is:

***A Woman on the Edge of Time: A Son's Search for his Mother* by Jeremy Gavron**

***The Lonely City: Adventures in the Art of Being Alone* by Olivia Laing**

***Eileen* by Ottessa Moshfegh**

***Anatomy of a Soldier* by Harry Parker**

***All That Man Is* by David Szalay**

***And the Sun Shines Now* by Adrian Tempny**

Of judging the Gordon Burn Prize 2016, novelist **Jenn Ashworth said:** "It's been an honour and a fascinating privilege to be involved in reading and discussing such a varied and accomplished selection of books for this year's prize. I admire Gordon Burn's work for its uncompromising precision, its fearlessness and its humanity. On the shortlist we have fine examples of writers working across a number of genres and in both fiction and non-fiction who we believe are working with that same commitment to truth-telling and

have created works which explore who and why we are, without sentiment or cynicism.”

Author and journalist **Rachel Cooke said:**

"As a long-time Gordon Burn fan, it was incredibly thrilling to be asked to judge a prize in his name - and one, moreover, that by its very nature inevitably conjures a truly eclectic mix of titles. It has been brilliant fun, with the added bonus that I have learned a lot."

Novelist **William Boyd said:** "This is a wonderfully rich and eclectic shortlist, every book a genuine contender. I think Gordon Burn would be extremely pleased."

Previous winners of the prize are the novelists **Ben Myers** (*Pig Iron*) and **Paul Kingsnorth** (*The Wake*) and the journalist **Dan Davies** (*In Plain Sight: The Life and Lies of Jimmy Savile*).

The winner of the Gordon Burn Prize 2016 will be announced on Friday 7 October at the opening of Durham Book Festival, a Durham County Council festival produced by New Writing North. The winning writer will receive a cheque for £5,000 and the opportunity to undertake a writing retreat of up to three months at Gordon Burn's cottage in the Scottish borders.

Ends

For all media enquiries, please contact:

Laura Fraine, Marketing and Communications Manager at New Writing North laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com Office: 0191 204 8850

Notes to Editors:

- The Gordon Burn Prize is run in partnership by the Gordon Burn Trust, New Writing North, Faber & Faber and Durham Book Festival. www.gordonburnprize.com
- The winner will be announced at Durham Book Festival on 7 October. For information about the festival see www.durhambookfestival.com
- The prize was open to work written in World English by writers of any nationality or descent who at the time of entering are permanently in residence in the United Kingdom or United States of America.
- The prize was open to books published between 1 July 2015 and 1 July 2016. Publishers were permitted to submit up to six titles per imprint. Works of translation, books for children and poetry were not eligible for the prize.
- Please visit the Gordon Burn Trust website for information on Gordon Burn's work. www.gordonburntrust.com

About the shortlist

***A Woman on the Edge of Time: A Son's Search For His Mother* by Jeremy Gavron**

It's 1965, and in Primrose Hill, a beautiful young woman has just gassed herself to death, leaving behind a suicide note, two small children, and an about-to-be-published manuscript: *The Captive Wife*.

Like Sylvia Plath, who died in eerily similar circumstances two years earlier just two streets away, Hannah Gavron was a writer. Bright, sophisticated, and swept up in the progressive politics of the 1960s, Hannah was a promising academic and the wife of a rising entrepreneur. Surrounded by success, she seemed to live a gilded life. But there was another side to Hannah, as Jeremy Gavron's searching memoir of his mother reveals.

Jeremy Gavron is the author of two non-fiction books and three novels, including *The Book of Israel*, winner of the Encore Award, and *An Acre of Barren Ground*. A former foreign correspondent in Africa and India, he lives now in London, and teaches at Warren Wilson College in North Carolina.

***The Lonely City: Adventures in The Art of Being Alone* by Olivia Laing**

What does it mean to be lonely? How do we live if we're not intimately engaged with another human being? When Olivia Laing moved to New York in her mid-thirties, she found herself inhabiting loneliness on a daily basis. Fascinated by the experience, she began to explore the lonely city by way of art. Moving fluidly between works and lives – from Edward Hopper's Nighthawks to Andy Warhol's Time Capsules – Laing conducts an electric, dazzling investigation into what it means to be alone.

Olivia Laing is a widely acclaimed writer and critic. Her work appears in numerous publications, including the Guardian, Observer, New Statesman, Frieze and New York Times. She's a Yaddo and MacDowell Fellow and was 2014 Eccles Writer in Residence at the British Library. Her first book, *To the River*, was shortlisted for the Royal Society of Literature Ondaatje Prize and the Dolman Travel Book of the Year. *The Trip to Echo Spring* was shortlisted for the 2013 Costa Biography Award and the 2014 Gordon Burn Prize. She lives in Cambridge.

***Eileen* by Ottessa Moshfegh**

The Christmas season offers little cheer for Eileen Dunlop, an unassuming yet disturbed young woman trapped between her role as her alcoholic father's carer in his squalid home and her day job as a secretary at the boys' prison.

Consumed by resentment and self-loathing, Eileen tempers her dreary days with perverse fantasies and dreams of escaping to the big city.

When the charismatic Rebecca Saint John arrives as the new counsellor at the prison, Eileen is enchanted and unable to resist what appears to be a miraculously budding friendship. In a Hitchcockian twist, her affection for Rebecca ultimately pulls her into complicity in a crime that surpasses her

wildest imaginings.

Otessa Moshfegh is a fiction writer from Boston. She was awarded the Plimpton Prize for her stories in *The Paris Review* and granted a creative writing fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. Her novel *Eileen* was awarded the 2016 Pen/Hemingway Award.

***Anatomy of a Soldier* by Harry Parker**

Captain Tom Barnes is leading British troops in a war zone. On all sides of this conflict, people are about to be caught up in the violence, from the man who trains one boy to fight the infidel invaders to Barnes's family waiting for him to return home. We see them not as they see themselves, but as all the objects surrounding them do: shoes and boots, a helmet, a trove of dollars, a drone, an exploding IED and the medical implements that are subsequently employed.

Anatomy of a Soldier is a novel about one man's journey of survival and the experiences of those around him.

Harry Parker grew up in Wiltshire. He joined the British Army when he was 23 and served in Iraq in 2007 and Afghanistan in 2009 as a Captain. He is now a writer and artist and lives in London.

***All That Man Is* by David Szalay**

Nine men. Each of them at a different stage in life, each of them away from home, and each of them is striving – in the suburbs of Prague, beside a Belgian motorway, in a cheap Cypriot hotel – to understand just what it means to be alive, here and now.

Tracing an arc from the spring of youth to the winter of old age, *All That Man Is* brings these separate lives together to show men as they are. And as the years chase them down, the stakes become bewilderingly high in this piercing portrayal of 21st century manhood.

David Szalay is the author of three previous novels: *Spring*, *The Innocent* and *London and the South-East*, for which he was awarded the Betty Trask and Geoffrey Faber Memorial prizes. In 2013 he was named as one of Granta's Best of Young British Novelists.

***And the Sun Shines Now* by Adrian Tempny**

On 15 April 1989, 96 people were fatally injured on a football terrace at an FA Cup semi-final in Sheffield. The Hillsborough disaster was broadcast live on the BBC; it left millions of people traumatised, and English football in ruins.

And the Sun Shines Now is a book about what arrived in the wake of the most controversial tragedy in the post-war era of Britain's history. The Taylor Report. Italia 90. Gazza's tears. Sky. The Premier League. And the transformation of a game that once connected club to community to individual into a global business so rapacious the true fans have been forgotten,

disenfranchised.

Adrian Tempany is a Liverpool supporter and a journalist who has written for the Observer and the Financial Times.