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**JUDGES SELECT FINALISTS
FOR 2006 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS**

**Winners to be Announced on November 15 at
Benefit Ceremony Hosted by Fran Lebowitz**

***Adrienne Rich, Robert Silvers and the late Barbara Epstein
Will Receive Lifetime Achievement Awards***

San Francisco, California (October 11, 2006) – The 20 Finalists for the 2006 National Book Awards, announced today, represent extraordinary writing in widely divergent styles and include the first graphic novel ever nominated for a National Book Award. The Awards are presented annually by the National Book Foundation.

Among the Finalists is Gene Luen Yang, a Chinese-American comic artist, whose graphic novel, *American Born Chinese*, is a Finalist in the category of Young People's Literature, and Mark Z. Danielewski, a Fiction Finalist, whose novel *Only Revolutions* is told in parallel free verse and breaks with conventions of traditional storytelling. In the Non-Fiction category, Taylor Branch is nominated for *On Canaan's Edge*, his third volume about Martin Luther King, Jr. Two nominated works in this category—Lawrence Wright's *The Looming Tower* and Rajiv Chandrasekaran's *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*—focus on 9/11 and Iraq, respectively. Two Fiction finalists—Ken Kalfus's *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* and Jess Walter's *The Zero*, use 9/11 as a point of departure, as well.

Several of this year's Finalists have been Finalists in previous years including Richard Powers (a Finalist in 1993), Taylor Branch (a Finalist in 1989), Louise Glück (a Finalist in 1992 and 1999), and M.T. Anderson (a Finalist in 2002).

The announcement was made today by poet **Lawrence Ferlinghetti** at his bookstore, City Lights Books, in the heart of San Francisco. Ferlinghetti received the Foundation's first Literarian Award in 2005. The winner in each of the four categories – Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry and Young People's Literature – will be announced at the National Book Awards Benefit Dinner and Ceremony in Manhattan on November 15. The dinner will be hosted by writer **Fran Lebowitz**. Each winner receives \$10,000 plus a bronze statue; each Finalist receives a bronze medal and a \$1,000 cash award.

The Finalists were selected by four distinguished panels of Judges who were given the charge of selecting what they deem to be the best books of the year. Their decisions are made independent of and without interference by the National Book Foundation and their deliberations are strictly confidential. To be eligible for a 2006 National Book Award, a book must have been published in the United States between December 1, 2005 and November 30, 2006 and must have been written by a United States citizen. This year the Judges chose from a record 1,259 entries submitted by publishers. The Young People's Literature category had the biggest jump in entries with an additional 53 titles over last year.

“Many of this year's selections take risks in their narrative structure, voice and subject matter,” said **Harold Augenbraum**, Executive Director of the National Book Foundation and co-host of the announcement event at City Lights Books. “In every category, the nominated works represent powerful writing and new approaches to often difficult topics.”

Also on the evening of November 15, the Board of Directors of the National Book Foundation will bestow its 2006 Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters upon poet **Adrienne Rich**, and the Literarian Award for Outstanding Service to the American Literary Community to **Robert Silvers** and, posthumously, **Barbara Epstein**, co-founders of *The New York Review of Books*.

In addition to the invitation-only gala awards ceremony, National Book Awards Week includes the following events: 5 Under 35 on November 13, The National Book Awards Teen Press Conference featuring all of the Finalists in the Young People's Literature Category on the morning of November 14 at the Donnell Public Library, and The Finalists Reading at The New School in the evening of November 14.

Following is the list of the 2006 National Book Award Judges and Finalists in Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry and Young People's Literature. For more information about the Finalists as well as National Book Awards Week events, visit www.nationalbook.org or call Camille McDuffie at Goldberg McDuffie Communications at (212)446-5106.

The Judges for the 2006 National Book Awards:

Fiction panel: **Bharati Mukherjee** (chair), Jonathan Lethem, Craig Nova, David Plante, and Marianne Wiggins.

Nonfiction panel: **Jill Jonnes** (chair), Kevin Boyle, Randall Kennedy, Luis Alberto Urrea, and Geoffrey Ward.

Poetry panel: **James Longenbach** (chair), Jimmy Santiago Baca, Li-Young Lee, Claudia Rankine, and C.D. Wright.

Young People's Literature panel: Margaret Bechard (chair), Patricia McKissack, Linda Sue Park, Benjamin Alire Saenz, and Jude Watson.

2006 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALISTS

Fiction

Mark Z. Danielewski, *Only Revolutions* (Pantheon)
Ken Kalfus, *A Disorder Peculiar to the Country* (Ecco/HarperCollins)
Richard Powers, *The Echo Maker* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
Dana Spiotta, *Eat the Document* (Scribner/Simon & Schuster)
Jess Walter, *The Zero* (Judith Regan Books/HarperCollins)

Nonfiction

Taylor Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965-68* (Simon & Schuster)
Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *Imperial Life in the Emerald City: Inside Iraq's Green Zone*
(Alfred A. Knopf)
Timothy Egan, *The Worst Hard Time: The Untold Story of Those Who Survived the Great American Dust Bowl* (Houghton Mifflin)
Peter Hessler, *Oracle Bones: A Journey Between China's Past and Present* (HarperCollins)
Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (Alfred A. Knopf)

Poetry

Louise Glück, *Averno* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
H.L. Hix, *Chromatic* (Etruscan Press)
Ben Lerner, *Angle of Yaw* (Copper Canyon Press)
Nathaniel Mackey, *Splay Anthem* (New Directions)
James McMichael, *Capacity* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)

Young People's Literature

M.T. Anderson, *The Astonishing Life of Octavian Nothing, Traitor to the Nation, Vol. 1: The Pox Party* (Candlewick Press)
Martine Leavitt, *Keturah and Lord Death* (Front Street Books/Boyd's Mills Press)
Patricia McCormick, *Sold* (Hyperion Books for Children)
Nancy Werlin, *The Rules of Survival* (Dial/Penguin)
Gene Luen Yang, *American Born Chinese* (First Second/Roaring Brook Press/Holtzbrinck)