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**JUDGES SELECT FINALISTS  
FOR 2007 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS**

**Winners to be Announced on November 14 at  
Benefit Ceremony Hosted by Fran Lebowitz**

*Joan Didion, Terry Gross Will Receive  
Lifetime Achievement Awards*

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (October 10, 2007) -- The 20 Finalists for the 2007 National Book Awards, announced today, represent extraordinary writing from both established and debut authors.

Among the Finalists are Denis Johnson, a Fiction Finalist for his new novel, *Tree of Smoke*, his first full length novel in nine years, and Christopher Hitchens, for his work of nonfiction, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*. Two of the Fiction Finalists are first novelists: Mischa Berlinski, author of *Fieldwork*, and Joshua Ferris, author of *Then We Came to the End*. Two of the Finalists for Young People's Literature are also nominated for first books: M. Sindy Felin for *Touching Snow* and Sara Zarr for *Story of a Girl*. For the first time in years, the Nonfiction category does not include books specifically about 9/11, Islam, and the Middle East. Instead, this category features powerful books examining the origins of the constitution, the history of the CIA, religion in public life, a biography and a memoir.

Three 2007 Finalists have been Finalists in previous years, including Edwidge Danticat (1995), Robert Hass (1996), and Ellen Bryant Voigt (2002).

The announcement was made today by author and social critic **Camille Paglia** at the Library Company in Philadelphia, the oldest public library in America, and was covered by NPR affiliate, WHYY Radio. 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 14. The dinner will be hosted by writer **Fran Lebowitz**. Each Winner receives \$10,000 plus a bronze statue; each Finalist received 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 2007 National Book Award, a book must have been published in the United States between December 1, 2006 and November 30, 2007 and must have been written by a United States citizen.

“The dazzling range in style and subject matter represented by this year’s selections is a powerful testament to the vibrancy of contemporary American literature,” said **Harold Augenbraum**, Executive Director of the National Book Foundation and co-host of the announcement event at the Library Company. “The judges were looking for the best writing of the year and they have found it.”

Also on the evening of November 14, the Board of Directors of the National Book Foundation will bestow its 2007 Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters upon novelist and essayist **Joan Didion** and the Literarian Award for Outstanding Service to the American Literary Community to **Terry Gross**, host and executive producer of National Public Radio’s “Fresh Air.”

In addition to the invitation-only gala awards ceremony, National Book Awards Week includes the following events: 5 Under 35, the Foundation’s evening of emerging fiction writers, on November 12, The National Book Awards Teen Press Conference featuring all of the Finalists in the Young People’s Literature Category on the morning of November 13 at the Donnell Public Library, and The Finalists Reading at The New School on the evening of November 13.

Following is the list of the 2007 National Book Award 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](http://www.nationalbook.org) or call Camille McDuffie at Goldberg McDuffie Communications at (212)446-5106.

#### **The Judges for the 2007 National Book Awards:**

**Fiction panel:** **Francine Prose** (chair), Andrew Sean Greer, Walter Kirn, David Means, and Joy Williams

**Nonfiction panel:** **David Shields** (chair), Deborah Blum, Caroline Elkins, Annette Gordon-Reed, and James Shapiro.

**Poetry panel:** **Charles Simic** (chair), Linda Bierds, David St. John, Vijay Seshadri, and Natasha Trethewey.

**Young People’s Literature panel:** **Elizabeth Partridge** (chair), Pete Hautman, James Howe, Patricia McCormick, and Scott Westerfeld.

## 2007 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALISTS

### Fiction

- Mischa Berlinski, *Fieldwork* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)  
Lydia Davis, *Varieties of Disturbance* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)  
Joshua Ferris, *Then We Came to the End* (Little, Brown & Company)  
Denis Johnson, *Tree of Smoke* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)  
Jim Shepard, *Like You'd Understand, Anyway* (Alfred A. Knopf)

### Nonfiction

- Edwidge Danticat, *Brother, I'm Dying* (Alfred A. Knopf)  
Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*  
(Twelve/Hachette Book Group USA)  
Woody Holton, *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (Hill and Wang/Farrar, Straus and Giroux)  
Arnold Rampersad, *Ralph Ellison: A Biography* (Alfred A. Knopf)  
Tim Weiner, *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (Doubleday)

### Poetry

- Linda Gregerson, *Magnetic North* (Houghton Mifflin Company)  
Robert Hass, *Time and Materials* (Ecco/HarperCollins)  
David Kirby, *The House on Boulevard St.* (Louisiana State University Press)  
Stanley Plumly, *Old Heart* (W.W. Norton & Company)  
Ellen Bryant Voigt, *Messenger* (W.W. Norton & Company)

### Young People's Literature

- Sherman Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (Little, Brown & Company)  
Kathleen Duey, *Skin Hunger: A Resurrection of Magic, Book One* (Atheneum Books for Young Readers)  
M. Sindy Felin, *Touching Snow* (Atheneum Books for Young Readers)  
Brian Selznick, *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* (Scholastic Press)  
Sara Zarr, *Story of a Girl* (Little, Brown & Company)