

**RELEASE OCTOBER 14, 2009**

**CONTACT:** Sherrie Young  
National Book Foundation  
(212) 685-0261  
syoun@nationalbook.org

## **FINALISTS ANNOUNCED FOR 2009 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS**

**Winners for Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry,  
and Young People's Literature to be Announced at  
60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on  
November 18  
at Benefit Ceremony Hosted by Andy Borowitz**

*Gore Vidal, Dave Eggers to Receive Lifetime Achievement Awards*

*Winner of the Best of the National Book Awards Fiction Poll to be Revealed*

**New York, NY (October 14, 2009)** –The 20 Finalists for the 2009 National Book Awards were announced today, representing a diverse group of authors of varied background, writing style, setting, and theme. Judges recognized both well-known and lesser-known writers, including one debut fiction writer, three previous National Book Award Finalists, and only the second graphic novel chosen as a Finalist in the Awards' history.

Giving the Fiction list an international flavor, Finalists include Daniyal Mueenuddin, who splits his time between the United States and Pakistan, the Irish-born writer Colum McCann, and Marcel Theroux, who was born in Uganda, lives in London, and is the son of 1981 and 1983 National Book Award Finalist Paul Theroux. This is the third nomination for poet Carl Phillips, a Finalist in 1998 and 2004, the second for poet Keith Waldrop, a Finalist in 1969, and the second for Young People's Literature author Phillip Hoose, a Finalist in 2001. The nonfiction list includes biographies of Cornelius Vanderbilt and Mithradates and two books on the natural environment. For its Young People's Literature list, the judges broke with fiction's recent dominance by selecting two nonfiction books, the autobiographical graphic novel *Stitches*, and two works of fiction.

The Winner in each category – Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry and Young People's Literature – will be announced at the 60<sup>th</sup> National Book Awards Benefit Dinner and Ceremony at Cipriani Wall Street in New York City on Wednesday, November 18. Satirist, comedian, and actor Andy Borowitz will emcee the event. Each Winner will receive \$10,000 and a bronze statue; each Finalist will receive a bronze medal and \$1,000. The dinner and ceremony are chaired this year by Hyatt Bass, Morgan Entrekin, Lynn Nesbit, and Shelley Wanger. Gore Vidal will receive the National Book Foundation's Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, to be presented by actress Joanne Woodward. The Foundation's Literarian Award for Outstanding

Contribution to the American Literary Community will go to Dave Eggers, to be presented by novelist Samantha Hunt.

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 the National Book Foundation, which organizes the Awards program, and their deliberations are strictly confidential. To be eligible for a 2009 National Book Award, a book must have been published in the United States between December 1, 2008 and November 30, 2009 and must have been written by a United States citizen.

“It’s an intriguing year of National Book Award Finalists, a good mix of well-known and lesser known writers,” said Harold Augenbraum, the National Book Foundation’s executive director.

This year the Foundation will also celebrate its six-decade history of honoring great books by highlighting the 77 Fiction books that received the National Book Award from 1950 to 2008. **The Best of the National Book Awards Fiction** included a daily blog page on each one of the 77 Winning books in Fiction ([www.nbfictionblog.org](http://www.nbfictionblog.org)) and the opportunity for the public to vote online for their favorite National Book Award Winning-Fiction book from a short-list that includes:

<b>John Cheever</b>	<i>The Stories of John Cheever</i> (National Book Award, 1981)
<b>Ralph Ellison</b>	<i>Invisible Man</i> (1953)
<b>William Faulkner</b>	<i>Collected Stories</i> (1951)
<b>Flannery O'Connor</b>	<i>The Complete Stories</i> (1972)
<b>Thomas Pynchon</b>	<i>Gravity's Rainbow</i> (1974)
<b>Eudora Welty</b>	<i>The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty</i> (1983)

The invitation-only gala awards ceremony marks the culminating event of National Book Awards Week, which includes: **5 Under 35**, the Foundation’s celebration of emerging fiction writers selected by four National Book Award Finalists and one National Book Award Winner, which will take place at powerHouse Arena in DUMBO, Brooklyn on the evening of November 16; **The National Book Awards Teen Press Conference**, which will feature all five Young People’s Literature Finalists on the morning of November 17 at The Celeste Bartos Forum of The New York Public; the five winners of the Foundation’s first **Innovations in Reading Prize**, who have flown in from all over the country (as far away as Hawai’i) and who will gather for a luncheon at The Ford Foundation in the afternoon on November 17; and the **National Book Award Finalists Reading** at The New School on the evening of November 17.

Following is the list of the 2009 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 Sherrie Young (212)685-0261.

## 2009 NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALISTS

### **Fiction**

Bonnie Jo Campbell, *American Salvage* (Wayne State University Press)  
Colum McCann, *Let the Great World Spin* (Random House)  
Daniyal Mueenuddin, *In Other Rooms, Other Wonders* (W.W. Norton & Co.)  
Jayne Anne Phillips, *Lark and Termite* (Alfred A. Knopf)  
Marcel Theroux, *Far North* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

### **Nonfiction**

David M. Carroll, *Following the Water: A Hydromancer's Notebook*  
(Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)  
Sean B. Carroll, *Remarkable Creatures: Epic Adventures in the Search for the Origins of Species*  
(Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)  
Greg Grandin, *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City*  
(Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt)  
Adrienne Mayor, *The Poison King: The Life and Legend of Mithradates, Rome's Deadliest Enemy* (Princeton University Press)  
T. J. Stiles, *The First Tycoon: The Epic Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt* (Alfred A. Knopf)

### **Poetry**

Rae Armantrout, *Versed* (Wesleyan University Press)  
Ann Lauterbach, *Or to Begin Again*, (Viking Penguin)  
Carl Phillips, *Speak Low* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)  
Lyrae Van Clief-Stefanon, *Open Interval* (University of Pittsburgh Press)  
Keith Waldrop, *Transcendental Studies: A Trilogy* (University of California Press)

### **Young People's Literature**

Deborah Heiligman, *Charles and Emma: The Darwins' Leap of Faith* (Henry Holt)  
Phillip Hoose, *Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)  
David Small, *Stitches* (W.W. Norton & Co.)  
Laini Taylor, *Lips Touch: Three Times* (Arthur A. Levine Books/Scholastic)  
Rita Williams-Garcia, *Jumped* (HarperTeen/HarperCollins)

**The Judges for the 2009 National Book Awards:**

**Fiction panel:** Charles Johnson (chair), Alan Cheuse, Junot Díaz, Jennifer Egan, Lydia Millet

**Nonfiction panel:** David Blight (chair), Amanda Foreman, Steve Olson, Camille Paglia, John Phillip Santos

**Poetry panel:** Cole Swensen (Chair), Mei-mei Berssenbrugge, A. Van Jordan, Kevin Young

**Young People's Literature panel:** Nancy Werlin (Chair), Kathi Appelt, Coe Booth, Carolyn Coman, Gene Luen Yang