



National Book Foundation

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2015 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS LONGLIST FOR NONFICTION

The ten contenders for the National Book Award for Nonfiction

New York, NY (September 16, 2015) – The National Book Foundation announces the Longlist for the 2015 National Book Award for Nonfiction. Finalists will be revealed on October 14.

Among the Nonfiction Longlist are several that evoke the writer's place and role in the exploration of ideas, and books that explore the natural environment. The authors are journalists, novelists, historians, poets, and naturalists. Included are a 2012 Pulitzer Prize-winning poet and a 1983 National Book Award Finalist for First Novel. All ten are appearing on the National Book Awards Nonfiction list for the first time.

2015 Longlist for the National Book Award for Nonfiction:

Cynthia Barnett, *Rain: A Natural and Cultural History*
Crown/Penguin Random House

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*
Spiegel and Grau/Penguin Random House

Martha Hodes, *Mourning Lincoln*
Yale University Press

Sally Mann, *Hold Still: A Memoir with Photographs*
Little, Brown/Hachette Book Group

Sy Montgomery, *The Soul of an Octopus: A Surprising Exploration into the Wonder of Consciousness*
Atria/Simon and Schuster

Susanna Moore, *Paradise of the Pacific: Approaching Hawai'i*
Farrar, Straus and Giroux/Macmillan

Michael Paterniti, *Love and Other Ways of Dying*
The Dial Press/Penguin Random House

Carla Power, *If the Oceans Were Ink: An Unlikely Friendship and a Journey to the Heart of the Quran*, Henry Holt and Company/Macmillan

Tracy K. Smith, *Ordinary Light: A Memoir*
Alfred A. Knopf

Michael White, *Travels in Vermeer: A Memoir*
Persea Books

Author biographies:

Cynthia Barnett is an award-winning environmental journalist who has reported on water from the Suwannee River to Singapore. She is the author of two previous books, *Mirage: Florida and the Vanishing Water of the Eastern U.S.*, which won the gold medal for best nonfiction in the Florida Book Awards, and *Blue Revolution: Unmaking America's Water Crisis*, a *Boston Globe* top ten science book of 2011. She lives in Gainesville, Florida. cynthiabarnett.net

Ta-Nehisi Coates is a national correspondent for *The Atlantic* and the author of the memoir *The Beautiful Struggle*. Coates has received the National Magazine Award, the Hillman Prize for Opinion and Analysis Journalism, and the George Polk Award for the *Atlantic* cover story "The Case for Reparations."

Martha Hodes is the author of two previous prize-winning books, *The Sea Captain's Wife: A True Story of Love, Race, and War in the Nineteenth Century* and *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South*. She has written for the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and Salon.com. Hodes is Professor of History at New York University. marthahodes.com

Sally Mann is one of America's most renowned photographers. She has received numerous awards, including National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, and Guggenheim Foundation grants, and her work is held by major institutions internationally. Her many books include *Second Sight* (1983), *At Twelve* (1988), *Immediate Family* (1992), *Still Time* (1994), *What Remains* (2003), *Deep South* (2005), *Proud Flesh* (2009), and *The Flesh and the Spirit* (2010). A feature film about her work, *What Remains*, debuted to critical acclaim in 2006. She lives in Virginia. sallymann.com

Sy Montgomery is a naturalist, documentary scriptwriter, and author of twenty acclaimed books of nonfiction for adults and children, including the memoir *The Good Good Pig*, a *New York Times* bestseller. The recipient of numerous honors, including lifetime achievement awards from the Humane Society and the New England Booksellers Association, she lives in New Hampshire. symontgomery.com

Susanna Moore is the author of two books of nonfiction, *Light Years: A Girlhood in Hawai'i* and *I Myself Have Seen It: The Myth of Hawai'i*. She is the author of seven novels including *The Life of Objects*; *One Last Look*; *In the Cut*; and *My Old Sweetheart*, a 1983 National Book Award Finalist for First Novel. susannamoore.com

Michael Paterniti is a journalist and essayist, and the bestselling author of *Driving Mr. Albert* and *The Telling Room*, named one of the best books of the year by NPR, *Entertainment Weekly*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*. Nominated for the National Magazine Award eight times, he is also the recipient of an National Endowment for the Arts grant and two MacDowell Fellowships. His stories have appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, *National Geographic*, *Harper's*, *Outside*, *Esquire*, and *GQ*, where he works as a correspondent. He is the co-founder of a children's storytelling center in Portland, Maine, where he lives. [Facebook.com/PaternitiWrites](https://www.facebook.com/PaternitiWrites)

Carla Power writes for *Time* magazine and is a former correspondent for *Newsweek*, where she produced award-winning stories, reporting from Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Her essays have appeared in *Vogue* and *O: The Oprah Magazine*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Guardian*, *Foreign Policy*, and others. Her work has been recognized with an Overseas Press Club award, a Women in Media Award, and the National Women's Political Caucus's EMMA

award. She lives in England. carlapower.com

Tracy K. Smith is the author of three books of poetry: *The Body's Question* was the winner of the 2002 Cave Canem Poetry Prize; *Duende* won the 2006 James Laughlin Award from the Academy of American Poets and an Essence Literary Award; and *Life on Mars* won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize and was selected as a *New York Times* Notable Book. Smith was the recipient of a Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award in 2004 and a Mrs. Giles Whiting Foundation Award in 2005. In 2014, the Academy of American Poets awarded Smith with the Academy Fellowship, awarded to one poet each year to recognize distinguished poetic achievement. In 2012, she served as a Judge for the National Book Awards in Poetry. Smith is the director of the creative writing program at Princeton University.

Michael White is the author of four collections of poetry: *The Island*; *Palma Cathedral*, winner of the Colorado Prize; *Re-entry*, winner of the Vassar Miller Prize, and *Vermeer in Hell*, winner of the Lexi Rudnitsky Editor's Choice Award. His poems and essay have appeared in *The Paris Review*, *The New Republic*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Western Humanities Review*, *Best American Poetry*, and many other magazines and anthologies. He is the chair of the creative writing program at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington.

Publishers submitted a total of 494 books for the 2015 National Book Award for Nonfiction. Five distinguished Judges were given the charge of selecting what they deem to be the best books of the year. Their decisions are made independently of the National Book Foundation staff and Board of Directors; deliberations are strictly confidential. To be eligible for a 2015 National Book Award, a book must have been written by a US citizen and published in the United States between December 1, 2014 and November 30, 2015.

2015 National Book Award Judges for Nonfiction:

Diane Ackerman (*Chair*) is the author of 24 books of nonfiction and poetry, including the bestsellers *A Natural History of the Senses*, *The Zookeeper's Wife*, and most recently *The Human Age: The World Shaped by Us*, which received the 2015 PEN Henry David Thoreau Award for Nature Writing. dianeackerman.com

Patricia Hill Collins is Distinguished University Professor of Sociology at the University of Maryland, College Park. She is the author of eight books, including *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism* and *On Intellectual Activism*. In 2008, she became the 100th President of the American Sociological Association.

www.socy.umd.edu/facultyprofile/Collins/Patricia%20Hill

John D'Agata is the author of *Halls of Fame*, *About a Mountain*, and *The Lifespan of a Fact*, and editor of *The Next American Essay*, *The Lost Origins of the Essay*, and the forthcoming *The Making of the American Essay*. The recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Howard Foundation, and Guggenheim Foundation, he teaches creative writing at the University of Iowa, where he directs the MFA in Nonfiction Writing Program.

Paul Holdengräber is founder and director of LIVE from The New York Public Library, which is celebrating its tenth anniversary. Over the past decade, Holdengräber has curated, interviewed, and hosted over 600 programs, offering cognitive theater at the Library and other venues, as well as speaking with a wide variety of thinkers and writers, including Salman Rushdie, Patti Smith, and Mike Tyson. He holds a doctorate in comparative literature from Princeton University.

Adrienne Mayor is a research scholar in classics and the history of science at Stanford University. She has written five books, including *The Poison King: The Life and Legend of Mithradates*, which was a 2009 National Book Award Finalist and won a 2010 Independent Publisher Book Award for Biography. Her work has been translated into ten languages. She is a regular contributor to the award-winning history of science website Wonders and Marvels. The remaining Longlist, for the Fiction category, will be revealed exclusively at newyorker.com at 9 a.m. EDT on September 17.

The National Book Award Finalists will be announced on October 14 and the Winners at the invitation-only National Book Awards Ceremony and Benefit Dinner on November 18 in New York City.

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The National Book Foundation's mission is to celebrate the best of American literature, to expand its audience, and to enhance the cultural value of good writing in America. In addition to the National Book

*Awards, for which it is best known, the Foundation's programs include **5 Under 35**, a celebration of emerging fiction writers selected by former National Book Award Finalists and Winners; the **National Book Awards Teen Press Conference**, an opportunity for New York City students to interview the current National Book Award Finalists in Young People's Literature; **NBA on Campus**, a partnership that brings National Book Award authors to colleges and universities across the country; the **Innovations in Reading Prize**, awarded to individuals and institutions that have developed innovative means of creating and sustaining a lifelong love of reading; and **BookUp**, a writer-led, after-school reading program for middle-school students..*

***The National Book Award** is one of the nation's most prestigious literary prizes and has a stellar record of identifying and rewarding quality writing. In 1950, William Carlos Williams was the first Winner in Poetry, the following year William Faulkner was honored in Fiction, and so on through the years. Many previous Winners of a National Book Award are now firmly established in the canon of American literature, such as Sherman Alexie, Louise Erdrich, Jonathan Franzen, Denis Johnson, James McBride, Joyce Carol Oates, and Adrienne Rich.*