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2017 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS LONGLIST FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S LITERATURE

The ten contenders for the National Book Award for Young People's Literature

New York City, September 12, 2017: The National Book Foundation today announced the Longlist for the 2017 National Book Award for Young People's Literature (YPL). Finalists will be revealed on October 4.

Two of this year's YPL Longlisted authors are previous National Book Award Finalists: Rita Williams-Garcia and Jason Reynolds. Collectively, the YPL Longlisted writers have been recognized by the Coretta Scott King Book Awards, the New York Public Library, the Smithsonian, the Fulbright Program, the Brooklyn Arts Council, and received the Newbery Honor, among many others. From California to Mississippi to D.C., these authors hail from regions across the United States, as well as international cities including Kolkata and Port-au-Prince. Between them, they've written over sixty titles. Nine of the ten authors are women, and two are debut novelists.

Several of this year's titles concern themselves with experiences of young immigrants or the children of immigrants. Others use aspects of the supernatural to inform the choices and revelations of their protagonists. Bonds of family—chosen, given, and sometimes given up—feature prominently. The YPL category includes titles aimed at a wide range of ages, but they share a commitment to exploring the complex and multidimensional lives of young people.

The 2017 YPL Longlist includes two former National Book Award Finalists. **Jason Reynolds**, a Kirkus Prize Winner and the recipient of multiple Coretta Scott King Honors, was a National Book Award Finalist last year for his novel *Ghost*. He returns this year with *Long Way Down*, in which a young man contemplates revenge for his brother's murder on a 60 second elevator ride that becomes increasingly crowded with ghosts from the past. **Rita Williams-Garcia** was a National Book Award Finalist in both 2009 and 2010, and her work has also garnered a Newbery Honor and two Coretta Scott King Book Awards. *Clayton Byrd Goes Underground* infuses the magic of blues into the story of a young boy who runs away from home to search for the music that was lost after the unexpected death of the grandfather he idolizes.

Angie Thomas's debut novel, *The Hate U Give*, is a #1 *New York Times* Best Seller, and has spent twenty-seven consecutive weeks on the Best Seller list. The novel follows sixteen-year-old Starr Carter, whose two worlds—her

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poor black neighborhood and her affluent suburban prep school—are thrown into confusion when she witnesses the killing of her childhood best friend by a police officer.

Reflecting much of the current news cycle, three of this year's titles deal with the realities of immigrant families and experiences. In **Mitali Perkins'** *You Bring the Distant Near*, two Bengali sisters struggle to adjust to life in the US, with their search for identity spanning three generations of family women. **Ibi Zoboi** draws from her experiences as a Haitian immigrant in her debut novel, *American Street*, in which young Fabiola Toussaint must navigate a costly freedom in Detroit after her mother is detained by immigration during their move to the United States. And in *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter* by **Erika L. Sánchez**, Julia, the daughter of immigrant parents, attempts to chart her own path for her life despite her parents' suffocating expectations and the lingering shadow of the sister she has recently lost.

Atmospheric and singular worlds serve as backdrops for two other titles. **Laurel Snyder's** *Orphan Island* tells the story of nine orphans on an idyllic island who must decide if the unwritten rules of their home should take precedence over their individual desires. A vivid setting of a different variety comes to life in *All the Wind in the World* by **Samantha Mabry**. Set in the cracked and arid deserts of the Southwest, Mabry's story follows two teenage laborers who learn that even the purest love is not without consequences.

The nature and limits of love, both familial and otherwise, are explored in **Robin Benway's** *Far From the Tree*, in which a young woman adopted at birth goes in search of her biological siblings. Raised as an only child, she discovers that life as the middle of three will challenge her conceptions of family bonds. The protagonist of **Elana K. Arnold's** *What Girls Are Made Of*, told from a young age that love is not unconditional, must come to her own conclusions when, despite her utter devotion, her boyfriend breaks up with her in this unflinching coming-of-age story.

Publishers submitted a total of 337 books for the 2017 National Book Award for Young People's Literature. The judges for YPL are Suzanna Hermans, Brendan Kiely, Kekla Magoon, Meg Medina (Chair), and Alex Sanchez. These 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 2017 National Book Award, a book must have been written by a US citizen and published in the United States between December 1, 2016 and November 30, 2017.

The National Book Award Finalists will be announced on October 4 and the Winners at the invitation-only National Book Awards Ceremony and Benefit Dinner on November 15 in New York City.

2017 Longlist for the National Book Award for Young People's Literature:

Elana K. Arnold, *What Girls Are Made Of*
Carolrhoda Lab / Lerner Publishing Group

Robin Benway, *Far from the Tree*
HarperTeen / HarperCollinsPublishers

Samantha Mabry, *All the Wind in the World*

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Algonquin Young Readers / Workman Publishing Company

Mitali Perkins, *You Bring the Distant Near*

Farrar, Straus and Giroux Books for Young Readers / Macmillan Publishers

Jason Reynolds, *Long Way Down*

Atheneum / Caitlyn Dlouhy Books / Simon & Schuster

Erika L. Sánchez, *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*

Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers / Penguin Random House

Laurel Snyder, *Orphan Island*

Walden Pond Press / HarperCollinsPublishers

Angie Thomas, *The Hate U Give*

Balzer + Bray / HarperCollinsPublishers

Rita Williams-Garcia, *Clayton Byrd Goes Underground*

Amistad / HarperCollinsPublishers

Ibi Zoboi, *American Street*

Balzer + Bray / HarperCollinsPublishers

Young People's Literature Biographies:

Elana K. Arnold writes books for and about children and teens. Her books have been included on the LA Public Library's Best Books of the Year list, the Bank Street Best Book list, the YALSA "Best Fiction for Young Adults" list, have been ALAN picks, and have been selected for inclusion in the Amelia Bloomer Project. Her most recent YA novel, *Infamous*, was a Westchester Fiction Award Winner and won the Moonbeam Children's Book Award. She holds a master's degree in Creative Writing/Fiction from the University of California, Davis and currently lives in Huntington Beach, California, with her husband, two children, and a menagerie of animals.

Robin Benway is the acclaimed author of *Emmy & Oliver*, the Also Known As series, *The Extraordinary Secrets of April, May, & June*, and *Audrey, Wait!* Benway's books have been published in sixteen languages, won international awards, and been bestsellers in several countries. Formerly a bookseller and book publicist, she lives in Los Angeles.

Samantha Mabry grew up in Texas and attended college at Southern Methodist University, where she majored in English Literature, minored in Spanish, and studied Latin and Classics. She received a master's degree in English from Boston College, and now teaches college courses in writing and Latino literature. She is also the author of *A Fierce and Subtle Poison*, a 2016 Indie Next List Pick, and lives in Dallas with her husband, a historian, and her pets, including a cat named Mouse.

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Mitali Perkins has written ten novels for young readers, including *Rickshaw Girl* (named one of the New York Public Library's 100 Great Children's Books) and *Bamboo People* (a 2011 YALSA Top Ten Fiction for Young Adults title). Her last book, *Tiger Boy*, won the South Asia Book Award. Mitali was born in Kolkata, India, and has also lived in Bangladesh, England, Thailand, Mexico, Cameroon, Ghana, and the United States. She currently resides in San Francisco, where she teaches at Saint Mary's College of California.

Jason Reynolds is a *New York Times* bestselling author, a National Book Award Finalist, a Kirkus Award winner, a Walter Dean Myers Award winner, an NAACP Image Award Winner, and the recipient of multiple Coretta Scott King honors. He is the author of *When I Was the Greatest*, *Boy in the Black Suit*, *All American Boys* (cowritten with Brendan Kiely), *As Brave As You*, *Jump Anyway*, and the first two books in the Track series, *Ghost* and *Patina*. You can find his musings at JasonWritesBooks.com.

Erika L. Sánchez is a poet, essayist, and novelist. She was the sex and love advice columnist for *Cosmopolitan for Latinas* for three years, and her writing has appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *Salon*, and the *Paris Review*. Her debut collection of poetry, *Lessons on Expulsion*, was published by Graywolf in 2017. She lives in Chicago, not far from the setting of *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*.

Laurel Snyder is a poet, essayist, and author of picture books and novels for children, including *The Longest Night*, *Bigger than a Bread Box*, and *Seven Stories Up*. She is also the editor of the nonfiction anthology *Half/Life: Jew-ish Tales from Interfaith Homes*, a graduate of the Iowa Writer's Workshop, and a commentator for NPR's *All Things Considered*. She lives in Atlanta with her family.

Angie Thomas was born, raised, and lives in Jackson, Mississippi. She is a former teen rapper whose greatest accomplishment was having an article about her in *Right On!* magazine. She holds a BFA in creative writing. *The Hate U Give* is her first novel.

Rita Williams-Garcia is the author of the Newbery Honor Book *One Crazy Summer*, which was a winner of the Coretta Scott King Award, a National Book Award finalist, the recipient of the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, and a *New York Times* bestseller. The sequels, *P.S. Be Eleven* and *Gone Crazy in Alabama*, were both Coretta Scott King Award winners. She is also the author of six distinguished novels for young adults: *Jumped*, a National Book Award finalist, *No Laughter Here*, *Every Time a Rainbow Dies* (a Publishers Weekly Best Children's Book), and *Fast Talk on a Slow Track* (all ALA Best Books for Young Adults); *Blue Tights*; and *Like Sisters on the Homefront*, a Coretta Scott King Honor Book. Rita Williams-Garcia lives in Jamaica, New York.

Ibi Zoboi was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and immigrated to the U.S. when she was four years old. She holds an MFA in writing for children and young adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts, where she was a recipient of the Norma Fox Mazer Award. Her award-winning and Pushcart-nominated writing has been published in *Haiti Noir*, the *Caribbean Writer*, the *New York Times Book Review*, *The Horn Book* magazine, and *The Rumpus*, among other publications. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband and their three children. *American Street* is her first novel.

2017 National Book Award Judges for Young People's Literature:

Suzanna Hermans is a second generation bookseller and co-owner of Oblong Books and Music in Millerton and Rhinebeck, NY. She currently sits on the Advisory Council of the American Booksellers Foundation for Free

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Expression and is past president of the New England Independent Booksellers Association. She has served on the American Booksellers Association's Advisory Council, as well as their Children's Advisory Council and New Voices Committee.

Brendan Kiely is *The New York Times* bestselling author of *All American Boys* (with Jason Reynolds), *The Last True Love Story*, and *The Gospel of Winter*. His work has been published in ten languages, received a Coretta Scott King Author Honor Award, the Walter Dean Myers Award, the Amelia Elizabeth Walden Award, and was twice selected as one of the year's Best Fiction for Young Adults by the American Library Association.

Kekla Magoon writes middle grade and YA novels, including *The Rock and the River*, *How It Went Down*, *X: A Novel* (with Ilyasah Shabazz), and the Robyn Hoodlum Adventures series. She has received an NAACP Image Award, the John Steptoe Award, two Coretta Scott King Honors, The Walter Award Honor, and was longlisted for the National Book Award. Kekla holds an M.F.A. from Vermont College of Fine Arts, where she now serves on the faculty.

Meg Medina (Chair) is the 2012 Ezra Jack Keats New Writers medal winner for *Tía Isa Wants a Car*, and a Pura Belpré winner for *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass*, and *Mango, Abuela and Me*. Her novel, *Burn Baby Burn*, named NAIBA's 2016 YA Book of the Year, was longlisted for the 2016 National Book Award and was a finalist for both the Kirkus Prize and the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize. In 2014 she was one of the CNN's 10 Visionary Women in America.

Alex Sanchez has written eight novels for young people, including the groundbreaking American Library Association Best Book for Young Adults *Rainbow Boys* and Lambda Award-winning *So Hard to Say*. His novel *Bait* won the 2009 Florida Book Award Gold Medal for Young Adult fiction. Alex received his master's in guidance and counseling from Old Dominion University and worked for many years as a youth and family counselor. Born in Mexico to parents of German and Cuban heritage, he now resides in Florida and on the web at www.AlexSanchez.com.