

Sunday Times Literary Awards announces shortlist

The 2017 Sunday Times Literary Awards has nominated five authors in the fiction category, for the Barry Ronge Prize, and five writers in the non-fiction category, for the Alan Paton Award. The winners will be announced at the Sunday Times Literary Awards on 24 June 2017.



Writers on shortlist for the Alan Paton award

Jennifer Platt, *Sunday Times* Books Editor, says, “The shortlisted books always reflect what is happening in our society and this year it is clear that the political has become the personal, and that we have to look at what happened to find out who and where we are today. Both shortlists have authors with strong voices and exceptional writing talent.”

Alan Paton Award shortlist

- *Under Nelson Mandela Boulevard: Life Among the Stowaways*, Sean Christie (Jonathan Ball Publishers)
- *Darwin's Hunch: Science, Race, and the Search for Human Origins*, Christa Kuljian (Jacana Media)
- *Murder at Small Koppie: The Real Story of the Marikana Massacre*, Greg Marinovich (Penguin Books)
- *My Own Liberator: A Memoir*, Dikgang Moseneke (Picador Africa)
- *Letters of Stone: From Nazi Germany to South Africa*, Steven Robins (Penguin Books)

The five books span centuries of history: from wartime Berlin to the Cape Town of today, from the Cradle of Civilisation millennia ago to the Marikana Massacre of recent memory. The judging panel included Justice Johann Kriegler and Professor Tinyiko Maluleke, chaired by Professor Pippa Green. “These are books that raise critical questions about our past, present and future,” says Green. “The big question being asked is who are we?”

“Many of the books deal with pain, but in different ways,” said one judge. “Some move quickly over it, others stop and pause.”

“There are great figures here and the marginalised, too. There is the grotesque suffering of the Holocaust as well as more personal, inward suffering of loneliness and loss of identity.”

Barry Ronge Prize shortlist

- *The Printmaker*, Bronwyn Law-Viljoen (Umuzi)

- *Period Pain*, Kopano Matlwa (Jacana Media)
- *Little Suns*, Zakes Mda (Umuzi)
- *The Woman Next Door*, Yewande Omotoso (Chatto & Windus)
- *The Safest Place You Know*, Mark Winkler (Umuzi)

The judging panel, consisting of Africa Melane and Kate Rogan, and chaired by Rehana Rossouw chose books they felt displayed rare imagination and style, and told fresh, provocative stories. “The words strike at the reader’s heart,” says Rossouw. “Many of the characters live on in my mind.”

“There’s a rich range of stories here, with writers foregrounding the personal over the political. From 1903, through the 1980s and right up to present-day, these are engaging, rewarding tales.”

“The stories hold up a perceptive mirror to South Africa of today, the lingering fault lines of racism, the social ills that beset us, but there’s love and redemption, too.”

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