



2018 Annual Debut Fiction Prize

Dear Writers,

Thank you for your patience while gathered the results from this first Debut Fiction Prize. There was a large response to the competition — one of the biggest we've had — and our judges, Tracey Icton and Adam Craig, had many manuscripts to read and evaluated. Not an easy task but they arrived at a long list of:

- Michael Apichella — *Keblatt on Taff*;
- Sarah Barr — *Swimming with Turtles*;
- Andrew Bate — *Two Spiders*;
- JC Blair — *Liar's Promise*;
- Heather Chadwick — *Heartwood*;
- Kelly Cowley — *Shrinking Sinking Land*;
- Eileen Dewhurst — *Come with Me*;
- Anne Forrest — *Lillies of the Valley*;
- Jane Fox — *The Killing of Agnes Hogg*;
- Vanessa Garside — *Skating on Thin Ice*;
- Mark Godfrey — *Light and Dark*;
- Clare Hobba — *Against the Shining Sands*;
- Kevin Koidl — *Lucas Must Die*;
- Jane Laugharne — *The Penaluna Way*;
- Rosemary Mairs — *Son*;
- Remy Maisel — *Grounds*;
- Terry Melia — *Tales from the Greenhills*;
- Miranda Merlan — *Trip Hazard*;
- Rory Milhench — *The Gallery of Last Words*;
- Sonya Moor — *Imperfect Timing: A Triptych in Three Time Zones*;
- Maura Murphy — *White Bear*;
- Felicia Nay — *Red Affairs, White Affairs*;
- Bruce William Nicol — *Rumpus Valley Dream*;
- Fiona Owen — *Sand Dogs/Tip Tip Tip/The Chimp at Spinneys*;
- Rebecca Parfitt — *Sometimes They Arrive Late & Other Macabres*;
- Diana Powell — *Trouble Crossing the Bridge*;
- Heather Prendergast — *Freedom/A New Life/Parallel Lines*;
- Patrick Riordan — *Tangent/Alice Unadorned/The Relentless Pursuit of Happiness*;
- Marilyn Ricci — *Prodigal*;
- Ruth Shabi — *The Water Hazard Family*;
- Michael Smith — *Bluebird*;
- Ali Thurn — *One Scheme of Happiness*;
- David Trebus — *Anna*;
- June Whitaker — *Gabriel*;
- Elina Xenophontos — *Shadows Scattered into Thin Air*.

Getting these down to the short list took some thought but, in the end, the following seven entries were chosen:

- Terry Melia — *Tales from the Greenhills*;
- Rory Milhench — *The Gallery of Last Words*;
- Sonya Moor — *Imperfect Timing: A Triptych in Three Time Zones*;
- Felicia Nay — *Red Affairs, White Affairs*;
- Rebecca Parfitt — *Sometimes They Arrive Late & Other Macabres*;
- Ruth Shabi — *The Water Hazard Family*; and
- Ali Thurn — *One Scheme of Happiness*.

Each entry had merits and strengths and, inevitably, choosing our top three entries was quite a challenge. But whittled the list down to these three:

Rory Milhench's *The Gallery of Last Words* offers a fascinating, original perspective on the related concepts of dying and disappearing, told through the eyes of two narrators on different sides of the debate about people's right to control the ending of their lives. A thought-provoking and challenging read that demonstrates the author's potential.

Sonya Moor's *Imperfect Timing: A Triptych in Three Time Zones* is a promising short story collection that displays skilful virtuosity of voice, bringing together an eclectic mix of narrators who all tell their diverse stories with the kind of conviction that leaves readers musing on them long after the story is over.

And Felicia Nay's *Red Affairs, White Affairs* is an elegantly written novel that vividly depicts 21st century Hong Kong life from the point of view of its German protagonist. The characterisation has been finely drawn with every individual coming to life through skilful use of detail while the storyline intrigues.

Tracey and Adam went over and over these three very different manuscripts, each strong in its own way. A tough choice but, finally, we both agreed that **the winner of the 2018 Annual Debut Fiction Prize is Felicia Nay with *Red Affairs, White Affairs***. As Tracey said: 'I found myself wanting to read more, the quality of the writing really does shine through making this a well deserved winner.'

Congratulations to all the short listed writers and especially to Felicia. Tracey and Adam are looking forward to mentoring *Red Affairs, White Affairs* over the coming year.

In the meantime, **thank you to everyone who entered and we hope to see more of your work in future.**

*Tracey Icton
Adam Craig*