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For Immediate Release

## TEXAS INSTITUTE OF LETTERS ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 2021 LITERARY AWARDS

The Texas Institute of Letters has announced the winners of the thirteen Annual TIL Literary Awards. In a year with a record number of contest entries, the TIL will award more than \$25,000 in prizes to these writers at the virtual TIL Awards Ceremony and Presentation on April 17, 2021.

The Texas Institute of Letters is a nonprofit Honor Society founded in 1936 to celebrate Texas literature and recognize distinctive literary achievement. The TIL's elected membership consists of the state's most respected writers— including winners of the Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award, PEN/Faulkner Award, Man Booker Prize, Academy Award, International Latino Book Award, Americas Award, Lambda Literary Award, MacArthur Fellowship, and Guggenheim Fellowship.

The winners of the 2021 TIL Literary Awards are Bryan Washington, Marisol Cortez, Joe Holley, Chera Hammons, David Meischen, Miguel Angel González-Quiroga, co-winners Darcie Little Badger and Francisco Stork, Christina Soontornvat, Jarrett Pumphrey and Jerome Pumphrey, Mary Ann Jacob, and ire'ne lara silva. The titles of the winning works (all published in 2020) and awards are listed below. On April 17<sup>th</sup>, Benjamin Alire Sáenz will also receive the Texas Institute of Letters' prestigious Lon Tinkle Award for Lifetime Achievement, the highest honor given by the TIL.

President Sergio Troncoso: "I am thrilled we had such a successful awards season, and I want to thank the judges for their work in selecting such a diverse group of writers as winners. All of these writers richly deserve many accolades for the high quality of their works. The TIL remains at the forefront of identifying excellent literature by writers dedicated to their craft."

In addition, the TIL will be celebrating its fourteen newly inducted Members for 2021: fiction and nonfiction writers Cristina Rivera Garza, George Saunders, Bryan Washington, David Samuel Levinson, and Preston Lewis; award-winning poets Allison Hedge Coke, Kevin Prufer, and Scott Wiggerman; children's and YA authors Crystal Allen and Chris Barton; journalist Gail Caldwell; literary activist Tony Diaz; award-winning songwriter Michael Martin Murphey; and historian Raymond Caballero. A series of virtual readings in March and early April will feature new Members, and the April 17<sup>th</sup> virtual Ceremony and Presentation will include live readings and special videos by new Members.

For more information on the TIL or on the April 17<sup>th</sup> virtual event, contact Sergio Troncoso, [president@texasinstituteofletters.org](mailto:president@texasinstituteofletters.org), or visit the TIL website at [www.texasinstituteofletters.org](http://www.texasinstituteofletters.org).

## 2021 TIL Award Winners

### **Jesse H. Jones Award for Best Book of Fiction**

Winner: *Memorial: A Novel*, by Bryan Washington, Riverhead Books.

Finalists: *Barn 8: A Novel*, by Deb Olin Unferth, Graywolf Press.  
*Rules for Being Dead*, by Kim Powers, Blair.



### **Sergio Troncoso Award for Best First Book of Fiction**

Winner: *Luz at Midnight*, by Marisol Cortez, FlowerSong Press.

Finalists: *Valentine: A Novel*, by Elizabeth Wetmore, Harper Publications.  
*Long Gone and Lost: True Fictions and Other Lies*, by Bobby Horecka, Madville Publishing.



### **Carr P. Collins Award for Best Book of Nonfiction**

Winner: *Sutherland Springs*, by Joe Holley, Hachette Books.

Finalists: *South To Freedom: Runaway Slaves to Mexico and the Road to Civil War*, by Alice Baumgartner, Basic Books.  
*All I Ever Wanted: A Rock 'n' Roll Memoir*, by Kathy Valentine, University of Texas Press.



### **Helen C. Smith Memorial Award for Best Book of Poetry**

Winner: *Maps of Injury*, by Chera Hammons, Sundress Publication.

Finalists: *Feel Puma: Poems*, by Ray Gonzalez, University of New Mexico Press.  
*Black Dove/Paloma Negra*, by Leslie Contreras Schwartz, FlowerSong Press.



**John A. Robertson Award for Best First Book of Poetry**

Winner: *Anyone's Son*, by David Meischen, 3: A Taos Press.

Finalists: *Brook the Divide*, by Rebecca Spears, Unsolicited Press.  
*Coatlícue Girl*, Gris Muñoz, FlowerSong Press.



**Ramirez Family Award for Most Significant Scholarly Book**

Winner: *War and Peace on the Rio Grande Frontier: 1830-1880*, by Miguel Angel González-Quiroga, Oklahoma University Press.

Finalists: *Los Adaes, the First Capital of Spanish Texas*, by Francis X. Galan, Texas A&M University Press.  
*Reading, Writing, and Revolution: Escuelitas and the Emergence of a Mexican American Identity in Texas*, by Philis Barragán Goetz, University of Texas Press.



**Jean Flynn Award for Best Young Adult Book**

Co-Winners: *Elatsoe*, by Darcie Little Badger, Levine Querido; and *Illegal*, by Francisco Stork, Scholastic Press.

Finalists: *Running*, by Natalia Sylvester, Clarion Books.  
*Apollo 13: A Successful Failure*, by Laura Edge, Twenty-First Century Books.



**Deirdre Siobhan FlynnBass Award for Best Middle Grade Book**

Winner: *A Wish in the Dark*, by Christina Soontornvat, Candlewick Press.

Finalists: *Rise of the Hafling King*, by David Bowles, Cinco Puntos Press.  
*BenBee and the Teacher Griefer: The Kids Under the Stairs*, by K.A. Holt, Chronicle Books.



### **Brigid Erin Flynn Award for Best Picture Book**

Winner: *The Old Truck*, by Jerome Pumphrey and Jarrett Pumphrey, Norton Young Readers.

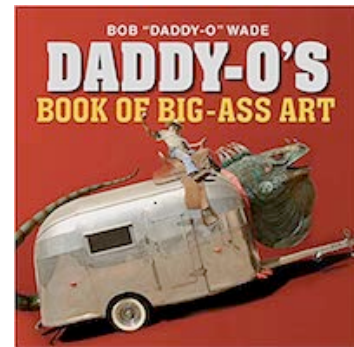
Finalists: *William Still and His Freedom Stories: The Father of the Underground Railroad*, by Don Tate, Peachtree Publishing.  
*For Beautiful Black Boys Who Believe in a Better World*, by Michael Waters, Flyaway Books.



### **Fred Whitehead Award for Best Design of a Trade Book**

Winner: *Daddy-O's Book of Big-Ass Art*, by Bob "Daddy-O" Wade, book design by Mary Ann Jacob, Texas A&M University Press.

Finalists: *The Ballad of Robert Ealey and His Five Careless Lovers*, by Joe Nick Patoski, book design by Nancy McMillen Design, Horne & Wellesley Publishers.  
*At Home on the Great Plains of Texas: The Paintings of Laura Lewis*, by Laura Lewis with Christina Mulkey, book design by Kristie Lee, Texas A&M University Press.



### **Kay Cattarulla Award for Best Short Story**

Winner: David Meischen, "Crossing the Light," *Storylandia*.

Finalists: John Blair, "Flagstaff," *Saturday Evening Post*.  
Daniel Miller, "Fall Cutting," *The Hopper Magazine*.



### **Edwin "Bud" Shrake Award for Best Short Nonfiction**

Winner: ire'ne lara silva, "A Place Before Words," *Texas Highways*.

Finalists: Roberto José Andrade Franco, "The Desert Reclaims Everything," *Texas Highways*.  
Emily Gogolak, "An Intersection at the End of America," *Oxford American*.





### **Lon Tinkle Award for Lifetime Achievement**

Winner of the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction for *Everything Begins and Ends at the Kentucky Club* and the Michael L. Printz Award and Lambda Literary Award for *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, Benjamin Alire Sáenz has been a prolific author with over twenty-five books published. His books include *The Inexplicable Logic of My Life*, *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood*, *Last Night I Sang to the Monster*, *In Perfect Light*, *Carry Me Like Water*, *The Book of What Remains*, *Dreaming the End of War*, *The Last Cigarette on Earth*, *A Gift from Papa Diego*, and *The Dog Who Loved Tortillas*. For his work, Sáenz has also won the American Book Award, Patterson Book Prize, Stonewall Book Award, Pura Belpré Award, Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award, Southwest Book Award, and two TIL awards dedicated to children's literature.

