



TEXAS INSTITUTE OF LETTERS ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 2026 LITERARY AWARDS

The Texas Institute of Letters has announced the winners of the fourteen Annual TIL Literary Awards. This year, TIL will award these writers and two other recipients over \$40,000 in prizes at the TIL Awards Ceremony in College Station, Texas, on April 18, 2026.

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.

From President David Bowles: "Each year, the TIL recognizes the best of Texas writing in a variety of genres that includes fiction, poetry, nonfiction, scholarly writing, translation, and short form works. Many thanks to our judges for carefully considering the entries. This year's winners demonstrate the extraordinary talent and diversity of writers with Texas roots. Celebrating their achievements is a highlight of our annual conference, and we are so grateful for the opportunity to recognize and support the best of Texas literature."

The winners of the 2026 TIL Literary Awards are José Skinner, Lauren D. Woods, Bob Livingston, Lise Olsen, Octavio Quintanilla, Cloud Delfina Cardona, Ashley Farmer, José Aguirre, Andrés Vera Martínez, Oscar Garza, Lee Sanders, Lupe Ruiz-Flores, Anne Wynter, Even Hill-Agnus, Marian Schwartz, Yvette DeChavez, and James Wade. Alongside them twenty-three honor winners were selected.

During the banquet weekend, Bill Broyles will receive the Texas Institute of Letters' prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award, our highest honor. The TIL will also present Irene Lara Silva with the Jesse H. Jones Fellowship.

For more information on the TIL or the April 18th awards ceremony, contact David Bowles, president@texasinstituteofletters.org, or visit the TIL website at www.texasinstituteofletters.org.

THE 2026 TIL AWARD AND HONOR WINNERS

Jesse H. Jones Award for Best Book of Fiction

Award winner: *The Search Committee* by José Skinner

Honor winners: *Midnight Somewhere* by Johnny Compton

The Midnight Knock by John Fram



Sergio Troncoso Award for Best First Book of Fiction

Award winner: *The Great Grown-Up Game of Make Believe*
by Lauren D. Woods

Honor winners: *The Bright Years* by Sarah Damoff

Bitter Texas Honey by Ashley Whitaker



Beverly Lowry Award for Best First Book of Nonfiction

Award winner: *Gypsy Alibi* by Bob Livingston

Honor winners: *Killer Story* by Claire St. Amant

Words Make a Way Through Fire
by Cyra Sweet Dumitru



Carr P. Collins Award for Best Book of Nonfiction

Award winner: *The Scientist and the Serial Killer: The Search for Houston's Lost Boys* by Lise Olsen

Honor winners: *No Less Strange or Wonderful: Essays in Curiosity*
by A. Kendra Greene

The Gunfighters: How Texas Made the West Wild
by Bryan Burrough



Burdine C. Johnson Award for Best Book of Poetry

Award winner: *Las horas imposibles/The Impossible Hours*
by Octavio Quintanilla

Honor winners: *The Complete Poems* by Wendy Barker
Wash by Ebony Stewart



Naomi Shihab Nye Award for Best First Book of Poetry

Award winner: *the past is a jean jacket* by Cloud Delfina Cardona

Honor winners: *Cloud Missives* by Kenzie Allen
City of Dis by Randall James Tyrone
Proprioception by C. Prudence Arceneaux



Texas Institute of Letters Award for Most Significant Scholarly Book

Award winner: *Queen Mother: Black Nationalism, Reparations, and the Untold Story of Audley Moore* by Ashley Farmer

Honor winner: *Entangled Alliances: Racialized Freedom and Atlantic Diplomacy During the American Revolution*
by Ronald Johnson



Frederick Luis Aldama Award for Best Graphic Novel

Best Author Award: *Monster Locker*, Jorge Aguirre & Andrés Vera Martínez

Best Illustrator Award: *Through Fences*, illustrated by Oscar Garza



Jean Flynn Award for Best Young Adult Book

Award winner: *Under the Light of Fireflies* by Lee Sander

Honor winners: *Aspasia's Choice* by Janice Shefelman

Who Owns the Moon by Cynthia Levison



Deirdre Siobhan FlynnBass Award for Best Middle Grade Book

Award winner: *The Pecan Sheller* by Lupe Ruiz-Flores

Honor winners: *Los Monstruos: Ava and the Owl-Witch*
by Diana López

Racing the Clouds by Sydney Dunlap



Brigid Erin Flynn Award for Best Picture Book

Award winner: *So Many Years* by Anne Wynter

Honor winners: *A Place Called Galveston* by Andrea Shapiro

A-Ztec by Emmanuel Valtierra



Soeurette Diehl Fraser Award for Best Translation

Co-winners: *Ultramarine*, translated by Eve Hill-Agnus

March 1917: The Red Wheel, Node III, Book 4, translated by Marian Schwartz



Kay Cattarulla Award for Best Short Story

Award winner: "Saint Gloria" by Yvette DeChavez

Honor winners: "Multi-Spatial Apartment Complex Malfunction
Results in Body Horror" by Reyes Ramirez

"Amarillo Boulevard" by David Wright Faladé



Edwin "Bud" Shrake Award for Best Short Nonfiction

Co-winners: "The Gospel of Change" by James Wade

"You Don't Have to Kill Us. You Don't Have
to Throw Us Away" by Michelle Pitcher

