

Fiction News

The Ridgefield Library's Fiction Newsletter



May 2018

AUTHOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT

THE EDGAR AWARDS



Michael Ondaatje

Michael Ondaatje is one of the few authors who has managed to garner almost equal critical success in the mediums of both prose and poetry. In both, his trademark is a kind of lush imagery, which makes for dense, yet utterly absorbing, reads. Influenced by his childhood in Sri Lanka, his prose retains a deeply poetic

property.... They're filled with flashbacks, memories, and juxtapositions, resulting in nonlinear narratives that his fans enjoy savoring through careful reading.



Partial List:

Warlight (2018)

Years after growing up in the care of a group of mysterious protectors who served in unspecified ways during World War II, a young man endeavors to piece together the truth about his parents and the unconventional education he received.

The Cat's Table (2011)

In the early 1950s, an eleven-year-old boy in Colombo boards a ship bound for England. Looking back from adulthood, the narrator relates a tale about the magical, often forbidden, discoveries of childhood and a lifelong journey that begins unexpectedly with a sea voyage.

Divisadero (2007)

It is the 1970s in Northern California. A farmer and his teenage daughters, Anna and Claire, work the land with the help of Coop, the enigmatic young man who lives with them. Theirs is a makeshift family, until they are riven by an incident of violence of both hand and heart.

Anil's Ghost (2000)

A young forensic anthropologist is sent by an international human rights group to her homeland, Sri Lanka, to discover the source of the organized campaigns of murder engulfing the island.

The English Patient (1992)

Four damaged lives converge in a bomb-riddled Italian villa in the last days of the war. A grieving nurse, a maimed thief, an emotionally detached Indian sapper are each haunted in a different ways by the riddle of the man they know only as the English patient.



The Edgar Awards are given annually by the Mystery Writers of America to honor the best in mystery writing. Here are this year's winners and nominees for best novel:

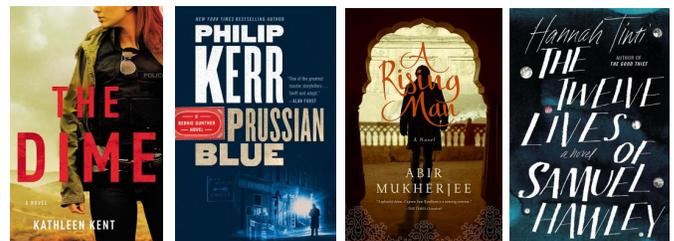
Best Novel

Bluebird, Bluebird by Attica Locke

When it comes to law and order, East Texas plays by its own rules—a fact that Darren Mathews, a black Texas Ranger, knows all too well. When his allegiance to his roots puts his job in jeopardy, he travels up Highway 59 to the small town of Lark, where two murders—a black lawyer from Chicago and a local white woman—have stirred up a hornet's nest of resentment. Darren must solve the crimes—and save himself in the process.



Other finalists:



The Dime by Kathleen Kent

Prussian Blue by Philip Kerr

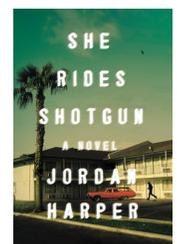
A Rising Man by Abir Mukherjee

The Twelve Lives of Samuel Hawley by Hannah Tinti

Best First Novel

She Rides Shotgun by Jordan Harper

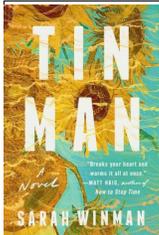
Fresh out of jail, Nate thrusts his 11-year-old daughter into a world of robbery and violence in an effort to keep her safe from the prison gang that has put a bounty on his head and murdered her mother.



Annotations from BookLetters and NoveList)

NEW FICTION

(Annotations from BookLetters and Novelist)

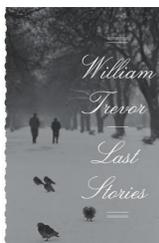


Tin Man by Sarah Winman.

Shortlisted for the Costa Novel of the Year Award, a heartbreaking celebration of love in all its forms gradually reveals a fallout between two longtime friends and Oxford students over the course of a decade marked by the marriage of one and the disappearance of the other.

Last Stories by William Trevor.

In this final collection of ten exquisite, perceptive and profound stories, William Trevor probes into the depths of the human spirit. Here we encounter a tutor and his pupil, whose lives are thrown into turmoil when they meet again years later; a young girl who discovers the mother she believed dead is alive and well; and a piano-teacher who accepts her pupil's theft in exchange for his beautiful music.



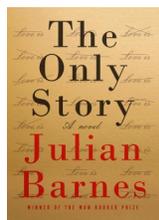
By Invitation Only by Dorothea Benton Frank.

A young, sophisticated Chicago woman falls for the owner of a farm on Johns Island, a lush lowcountry paradise off the coast of South Carolina, and trades the bustle of cosmopolitan city life for the vagaries of a small Southern community.



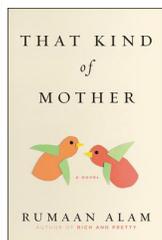
The Only Story by Julian Barnes.

A man who ran away as a teen university student with a married woman more than twice his age reflects on how they fell in love, how he freed her from a sterile marriage and how their relationship fell apart as she succumbed to depression.



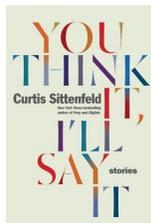
That Kind of Mother by Rumaan Alam.

Overwhelmed by new motherhood in spite of her love for her infant son, Rebecca, a white woman, asks a kind black woman, Priscilla, to become her family's nanny, only to have her perspectives changed about her own life of privilege, a situation that compels her to take on unanticipated challenges in the aftermath of a tragedy.



You Think It, I'll Say It: Stories by Curtis Sittenfeld.

A collection of ten short stories from the author of *Eligible*. Literary fiction with young adult appeal. Well-developed characters in fascinating circumstances. Poignant, timely, sad, funny, and cohesive. Sittenfeld shows her craft in a new form.—Leanne Milliman for *LibraryReads*.



Jane Seymour, the Haunted Queen by Alison Weir. Compelled by her ambitious father to live at court as lady-in-waiting to beloved fellow Catholic Katherine of Aragon, Jane Seymour is horrified when Henry VIII shunts the queen aside to pursue Anne Boleyn, whose failure to rapidly produce a male heir causes Jane herself to be targeted by the king's obsessive desire for a son.

The Dark Angel by Elly Griffiths.

In this highly atmospheric mystery, Ruth Galloway—"a captivating amateur sleuth" (Louise Penny)—and DCI Nelson investigate a murder in a medieval Italian town where dark secrets are buried as deep as bones. This is tenth installment in the series.



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STAFF PICKS

Elise's Pick



Radio Free Vermont by Bill McKibben.

When the last independent radio station in Vermont is acquired by a media conglomerate, the new owners try to suppress the progressive views of it's most popular host. A proud Vermonter, who bemoans his state's growing homogenization, 72-year-old Vern Barclay finds himself the reluctant leader of a movement advocating that Vermont should secede from the U.S. As he and his motley crew stage creative, witty and gentle acts of resistance across Vermont, their capers infuriate the Governor, who Vern once described as "a standard issue hack." Pursued by government agents, Vern and his staff are forced to go underground to broadcast their subversive and increasingly successful message. Written by a highly respected environmental journalist, *Radio Free Vermont* is a delightful romp, "a fable of resistance," that champions an old fashioned medium and old fashioned civic virtues, a place where town hall meetings count and "neighbors make things for neighbor."

Dorothy's Picks

The Ensemble by Aja Gabel.

This stunning debut novel provides a window into the insular world of professional musicians as it illuminates the harmonies and disharmonies among the members of a string quartet from their days in the conservatory through two decades of playing and the approach of middle age. There are Jana and Brit, respectively first and second violinists, Henry, the violist and former child prodigy, and Daniel, cellist and the oldest of the group. Through the ups and downs of their competitive world, the special bonds formed by their collective intimacy, and the highs and lows of their lives outside the quartet, *The Ensemble* explores what it means to find your place in the world through the prism of this tightknit group living in a rarified world.



Love and Ruin by Paula McLain.



After writing about Hemingway's first and second marriages in *The Paris Wife*, McLain now focuses on Martha Gellhorn, who became Hemingway's third spouse and the only one who left him. Martha struggles to break barriers as she pursues her ambitions as a writer and journalist. When Hemingway challenges her to join him to cover the Spanish Civil War, Gellhorn, ever the adventurer, jumps at the chance. There she begins a tempestuous relationship with Hemingway that will unfold over the next eight years as Gellhorn refuses to be overshadowed by her famous partner. By using the first-person narrative for her protagonist, McLain gives us a fascinating portrait of a woman drawn to cover world conflicts and who refuses to sacrifice her own ambitions for anyone.