



100 Prized Poems: Twenty-five years of the Forward Books

Chosen by William Sieghart CBE

Published by Forward Worldwide with Faber & Faber, 15 September 2016 (£9.99 paperback)

“The Forward Prizes have turned a spotlight on contemporary poetry which is both searching and glamorous” – Carol Ann Duffy

100 Prized Poems: Twenty-five years of the Forward Books is a distillation of the 25 annual Forward Books of Poetry published since 1992, a series highlighting the works commended each year for the prestigious Forward Prizes.

The anthology – 100 poems by 100 poets – is a sampler of the best poems of the last quarter century. Chosen by William Sieghart CBE, chairman of the Forward Arts Foundation, the roll-call of poets included is a Who’s Who of poetry excellence and features both familiar names – Carol Ann Duffy, Don Paterson, Derek Walcott - and fresh voices – Kate Tempest, Kei Miller and Emily Berry.

“Back in the 1990s, the UK and Ireland were different: it was, for example, entirely unexceptional for authoritative anthologies of twentieth century poetry to contain four times as many men as women, all, or almost all, white. The contemporary canon as monolith belongs to history now: and a close study of the Forward Books over the years shows how change can happen.”

– William Sieghart CBE, chairman of the Forward Arts Foundation

In 1992 George Bush and Boris Yeltsin declared the Cold War officially over. The first McDonalds opened in China. The Maastricht treaty created the European Union. And in that year a jury chaired by Stephen Spender awarded the first Forward Prizes for Poetry: Thom Gunn won the Best Collection prize for *The Man with Night Sweats* while Simon Armitage, a young probation officer from Manchester, collected the cheque for Most Promising Young Poet, and Jackie Kay walked off with the Best Single Poem award.

Since this promising beginning, the prizes for **Best Collection**, **Best First Collection** and **Best Single Poem** have grown to be the most widely coveted annual awards for poetry published in Britain and Ireland. The books are now studied in schools all over the country – one anthology is even on the A Level English Literature syllabus. Individually and as a series, they give an overview of the variety and range of poetry published now.

The anthology’s publication comes on the eve of the 25th Forward Prizes for Poetry, which will be presented at a special event at the Royal Festival Hall on Tuesday 20 September, featuring readings from all the shortlisted books.

This year's judging panel is chaired by **Malika Booker**, writer and multidisciplinary artist, and includes poets **George Szirtes** and **Liz Berry**, with singer/songwriter **Tracey Thorn** and **Don Share**, editor of Poetry magazine.

The Forward Prizes for Poetry 2016 shortlist in full:

The Forward Prize for Best Collection (£15,000)

Vahni Capildeo – *Measures of Expatriation* (Carcenet)
Ian Duhig – *The Blind Roadmaker* (Picador Poetry)
Choman Hardi – *Considering the Women* (Bloodaxe Books)
Alice Oswald – *Falling Awake* (Cape Poetry)
Denise Riley – *Say Something Back* (Picador Poetry)

The Felix Dennis Prize for Best First Collection (£5,000)

Nancy Campbell – *Disko Bay* (Enitharmon Press)
Ron Carey – *Distance* (Revival Press)
Harry Giles – *Tonguit* (Freight Books)
Ruby Robinson – *Every Little Sound* (Liverpool University Press)
Tiphonie Yanique – *Wife* (Peepal Tree Press)

The Forward Prize for Best Single Poem (£1,000)

Sasha Dugdale – 'Joy' (PN Review)
David Harsent – 'from Salt' (Poetry London)
Solmaz Sharif – 'Force Visibility' (Granta Magazine)
Melissa Lee-Houghton – 'i am very precious' (Prac Crit)
Rachel Hadas – 'Roosevelt Hospital Blues' (Times Literary Supplement)

Tickets for the awards ceremony and readings can be found at:
www.southbankcentre.co.uk/literature

For further information, visit www.forwardartsfoundation.org or join the conversation at @forwardprizes #forwardprizes.

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Notes to editors

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Notes to editors

1. The Forward Prizes, now in their 25th year, are among the most sought after accolades in the UK and Ireland for both established and emerging poets. With a total value of £21,000, the prizes are divided into three categories: The Forward Prize for Best Collection (£15,000), The Felix Dennis Prize for Best First Collection (£5,000) and the Forward Prize for Best Single Poem (£1,000)

2. Biographies of the shortlisted poets and samples of their work can be found on www.forwardartsfoundation.org/forward-prizes-for-poetry

3. Past winners of the Forward Prize for Best Collection are: Claudia Rankine *Citizen: An American Lyric* (Penguin) 2015, Kei Miller *The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion* (Carcenet) 2014, Michael Symmons *Roberts Drysalter* (Cape Poetry) 2013, Jorie Graham *PLACE* (Carcenet) 2012, John Burnside *Black Cat Bone* (Cape Poetry) 2011, Seamus Heaney *Human Chain* (Faber and Faber) 2010, Don Paterson *Rain* (Faber and Faber) 2009, Mick Imlah *The Lost Leader* (Faber and Faber) 2008, Sean O'Brien *The Drowned Book* (Picador Poetry) 2007, Robin Robertson *Swithering* (Cape Poetry) 2006, David Harsent *Legion* (Faber and Faber) 2005, Kathleen Jamie *The Tree House* (Picador Poetry) 2004, Ciaran Carson *Breaking News* (Gallery Press) 2003, Peter Porter *Max is Missing* (Picador Poetry) 2002, Sean O'Brien *Downriver* (Picador Poetry) 2001, Michael Donaghy *Conjure* (Picador Poetry) 2000, Jo Shapcott *My Life Asleep* (OUP) 1999, Ted Hughes *Birthday Letters* (Faber and Faber) 1998, Jamie McKendrick *The Marble Fly* (OUP) 1997, John Fuller *Stones and Fires* (Chatto) 1996, Sean O'Brien *Ghost Train* (OUP) 1995, Alan Jenkins *Harm* (Chatto) 1994, Carol Ann Duffy *Mean Time* (Anvil Press) 1993 and Thom Gunn *The Man with Night Sweats* (Faber and Faber) 1992.

4. Forward Arts Foundation, which runs the Forward Prizes for Poetry and National Poetry Day, is an arts charity that celebrates excellence in poetry and widens its audience by encouraging the enjoyment, discovery and sharing of poems. Support for its activities is generously provided by Forward Worldwide, Arts Council England, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, the Monument Trust and the Rothschild Foundation. Find it at www.forwardartsfoundation.org and @forwardprizes and @poetrydayuk.

5. The Forward Prizes have been sponsored since their inception by Forward Worldwide, a global content marketing agency based in London and Shanghai, creating and delivering best-in-class omni-channel content strategies (digital and print) for blue-chip brands. Clients include Patek Philippe, Tesco, American Express, Fabric, Standard Life, Virgin Atlantic, Singapore Airlines and Lufthansa. www.forwardww.com

6. The Forward Book of Poetry 2017 (published by Forward Worldwide with Faber & Faber, £8.99) is also out now, showcasing the best contemporary poems published in the British Isles this year, including the poets shortlisted for 2016's Forward Prizes for Poetry. This anthology, for seasoned poetry lovers and new readers alike, is the 25th in a series that offers an invaluable annual overview of the current state of poetry.