



PRESS RELEASE – 18 January 2017

## **Andrew Marr to chair 2017 Forward Prizes jury**

### **E-zines eligible alongside printed poetry magazines for Best Single Poem**

The journalist and broadcaster Andrew Marr is to chair the jury of the 2017 Forward Prizes for Poetry, which will be awarded at the Royal Festival Hall on 21 September 2017.

Andrew Marr says, “After a quarter of a century, the Forward Prizes for Poetry have established themselves as central to the literary landscape of modern Britain - a benevolent act of imagination which has paid off richly – and I am thrilled to be chairing the 2017 awards.

Of all the arts, poetry is the one at which the British have traditionally excelled most. Across these isles, we are living through a period particularly rich in poetry-making. Barely a week goes past when I'm not introduced to a poet or a poem which makes me see the world a little differently and with all the political turbulence around, I can't wait to get stuck in to some more rigorous reading.

With my fellow jurors - the artist Chris Riddell, the scholar Sandeep Parmar and the poets Mona Arshi and Ian Duhig - we will be looking for newly published poems that offer a vital counterbalance to the crude slogans, sound bites and tired metaphors of public life, poems that rub the dull tarnish from our language and make it new.”

The Forward Prizes for Poetry, now in their 26<sup>th</sup> year, are among the most prestigious literary awards in Britain and Ireland. Past winners include Seamus Heaney, Alice Oswald, Ted Hughes and, in 2016, Vahni Capildeo, Tiphonie Yanique and Sasha Dugdale.

Awards are made in three categories for poetry published between October 2016 and September 2017. The three prizes - £10,000 for Best Collection, £5,000 for

Best First Collection and £1,000 for Best Single Poem - are unique in honouring both established names and new voices. They have been sponsored since 1992 by the content marketing agency, Bookmark, which traded until 2016 as Forward Worldwide.

Andrew Marr and his fellow judges Chris Riddell, Ian Duhig, Mona Arshi and Sandeep Parmar will also be choosing poems to feature in the 26<sup>th</sup> annual Forward Book of Poetry, published on the eve of the prizes in September 2017.

Susannah Herbert, executive director of the Forward Arts Foundation, the charity that runs the Prizes and co-ordinates National Poetry Day, says: “We’re thrilled to bring together this panel of five sharp readers to judge the awards and nominate poems for inclusion in *The Forward Book of Poetry*. They bring a mass of experiences to their judging – journalism, art, law, scholarship – and are alive to the power of the best contemporary poetry to reach and move new audiences.”

The Forward Prize for Best Single Poem is now open to online journals and web-only publications alongside traditional printed poetry magazines. In making this change the Prizes’ organisers recognise the growing role played by digital editors and publishers in building interest in new poetry. To ensure the judges are not overwhelmed with submissions in this category, the Forward Arts Foundation are working with The Poetry Library, the Scottish Poetry Library and Poetry Ireland, who between them maintain extensive listings of UK-and-Ireland based online poetry magazines: online magazines listed on these organisations' sites will be eligible.

Chris McCabe of The Poetry Library says: “Online magazines are the quick pulse of contemporary poetry. The Poetry Library invites their editors to get in touch with us so we can list their publications on our website and encourage new audiences and keen poets to engage with the great work they do. We're delighted to be working with the Forward Prizes to celebrate the energetic online world of poetry publishing.”

For further information and photographs, please contact the Forward Arts Foundation on [info@forwardartsfoundation.org](mailto:info@forwardartsfoundation.org) or Holly Hopkins on 020 7845 4655.

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### **Notes to Editors:**

1. The Forward Prizes, now in their 26<sup>th</sup> year, are among the most sought after accolades in the UK and Ireland for both established and emerging poets. With a total value of £16,000, the prizes are divided into three categories: the Forward Prize for Best Collection (£10,000), the Felix Dennis Prize for Best First Collection (£5,000) and the Forward Prize for

## Best Single Poem (£1,000)

2. Past winners of the Forward Prize for Best Collection are: Vahni Capildeo *Measures of Expatriation* (Carcenet) 2016, 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
3. Forward Arts Foundation, which runs the Forward Prizes for Poetry and co-ordinates National Poetry Day, is a charity that promotes poetry in the public realm, celebrating poetic excellence and widening its audience. Find it at [www.forwardartsfoundation.org](http://www.forwardartsfoundation.org) @forwardprizes and @poetrydayuk.
4. The Poetry Library, founded in 1953 by The Arts Council, is the most comprehensive and accessible collection of poetry from 1912 in Britain. The Poetry Library, currently located in the Southbank Centre, contains over 200,000 items of poetry, ranging from books, pamphlets, cassettes, magazines and DVDs, and runs [poetrymagazines.org.uk](http://poetrymagazines.org.uk) a full-text database for active UK poetry magazines. The Library is free to join and hosts readings, art exhibitions, and workshops. To find out more, go to [www.poetrylibrary.org.uk](http://www.poetrylibrary.org.uk)
5. Bookmark, the world-leading content and communications company, has been the sponsor and key supporter of the Forward Prizes for Poetry since they were first awarded in 1992. Bookmark creates engaging, shareable content in multiple formats and languages: it has offices in the UK, Canada, the US, Peru, Chile and China and its clients include Patek Philippe, Air Canada, American Express, LATAM, Dyson,

Lindt, Standard Life and Tesco. Until 2016, Bookmark traded as Forward Worldwide. For more information, see [@BookmarkContent](#) and [bookmarkcontent.com](http://bookmarkcontent.com).

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