



Media Release | Embargoed until 0.01am BST on Tuesday 8 June 2021

## The 30th Forward Prizes for Poetry Shortlists announced

### The year's best poems: making sense and making connections

*Kayo Chingonyi – Tishani Doshi – Selima Hill – Luke Kennard – Stephen Sexton  
Caleb Femi – Alice Hiller – Cynthia Miller – Holly Pester – Ralf Webb  
Fiona Benson – Natalie Linh Bolderston – John McCullough – Denise Riley – Nicole Sealey*

Poems of connection, creative witness and catharsis are among the highlights of the **30<sup>th</sup> Forward Prizes shortlists**, announced today (8 June).

The isolation over the last 15 months have impacted heavily on physically coming together to mourn, to protest and to enjoy the arts collectively. We missed people, travel, the chance to be surprised and to have fun. Readers will find opportunities through the Forward Prizes shortlisted poems to do all these things. As Tashani Doshi states 'poems can act as bridges, allow us to connect personal losses to public grief... a poem can be a radical act of solidarity and joy, and bring us closer to ourselves.'

Some of the shortlisted works were, at least partially, written in lockdown. Others are drawn together from the Before Times but feel even more resonant where grief and anxiety have been experienced in isolation and where time moves strangely. As the Guardian observed in January 2021 'to express the grief and dislocation of our times, only poems will do.' Some explore what Cynthia Miller describes as 'a feeling of being in an "elsewhere"' enabling readers to 'see themselves or their experiences or stories captured in a way that feels new, important, different.' Others are crowded with people – the awkward interactions of a house party in Luke Kennard's *Notes on the Sonnets*, the crystalline portraits of men in Selima Hill's *Men Who Feed Pigeons*, the ode to the North Peckham Estate in Caleb Femi's *Poor*.

The Prizes are awarded in 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).

The collections in the running for the £10,000 **Best Collection** award touch on the multiple inheritances of nation, history and the body (Kayo Chingonyi: *A Blood Condition*); the pressing contemporary issues of feminism, ecology, disease, migration and war (Tishani Doshi: *A God at the Door*); on men and different kinds of women's relationships with men (Selima Hill: *Men Who Feed Pigeons*); Shakespeare's sonnets recast through a house party where it is never quite clear what is an act and what is real (Luke Kennard: *Notes on the Sonnets*) and how the imagination responds to stress to preserve and comfort itself (Stephen Sexton: *Cheryl's Destinies*).

Mónica Parle, Executive Director of the **Forward Arts Foundation**, the charity which runs the Forward Prizes, said: 'Poetry has long been a source of solace in times of crisis and grief, or a boon in times of celebration. It was no surprise to see interest and engagement soar on social media across the pandemic, and what joy to see the Prizes celebrate such a fantastic range of collections, that highlight such a breadth of lived experience. A perfect slice of the now.'

For Media Enquiries: Dusty Miller PR [dustymillerpr@gmail.com](mailto:dustymillerpr@gmail.com) 07955 904 482  
Forward Arts Foundation [info@forwardartsfoundation.org](mailto:info@forwardartsfoundation.org) 020 7845 4655

The chair of the 2021 Forward Prizes jury James Naughtie said: 'We know that the year - and more - of the pandemic was also the year of reading. And that means poetry as well as prose. It was a time when everyone was reminded how much we need to be exposed to the power of the imagination. And the short lists for the Forward Prizes 2021 are a reminder that the poetic imagination isn't wholly introspective, although it cuts deep. It's bold, limitless in ambition and it touches every part of our lives - our own hopes and fears, our communities, and the wider world that so often seems bewildering and over-powering. These poets find pathways into the deepest feelings and discover vantage points that take a reader (or a listener) to another place. In their hands we look at the world differently. This is a moment for poetry; and all these poets deliver. Read them, and take off.'

### **The Forward Prizes for Best Collection shortlist:**

**Kayo Chingonyi's** lyrical, deeply moving second collection, *A Blood Condition*, moves from the bank of the Zambezi river to London and Leeds, finding its way to deeply personal ground.

*A God at the Door* by **Tishani Doshi** is a collection for this moment in history that bestows power on the powerless and employs beauty to overcome trauma.

*Men Who Feed Pigeons* by **Selima Hill** brings together seven contrasting but complementary sequences about men and different kinds of women's relationships with men, combining startling humour and uncomfortable truths with skilfully hewn brevity.

*Notes on the Sonnets* sees **Luke Kennard** reimagining Shakespeare's Sonnets through an enjoyably depressing, nervous house party where the guests anxiously play their roles as if in an unrehearsed play.

*Cheryl's Destinies* by **Stephen Sexton** playfully explores the comfort of the fantastical and enchanted when the real is hard to bear.

Certain themes present in the Best Collection shortlist – of trauma and survival, social interaction and alienation, heritage and family – also appear in the shortlist for the **Felix Dennis Prize for Best First Collection**.

**Caleb Femi's** visionary *Poor* is both a tough and vulnerable portrait of the estate he grew up on and the people who live there. **Alice Hiller's** *bird of winter* is a powerful, healing act of creative witness to childhood sexual abuse and grooming. **Cynthia Miller's** energetic, heartfelt, inventive *Honorifics* is about mothers, migration and her mixed Chinese-Malaysian heritage. **Holly Pester's** collection of resistance, *Comic Timing*, explores sex, rent, worker's rights, feminisms and reproductive rights with both absurdity and seriousness. **Ralph Webb's** *Rotten Days in Late Summer* weaves together the loss of his father and his mental health struggles with textures of youth and adulthood in the working communities of the West Country.

**The 2021 Forward Prize for Best Collection (£10,000)**

Kayo Chingonyi – *A Blood Condition* (Chatto & Windus)  
Tishani Doshi – *A God at the Door* (Bloodaxe Books)  
Selima Hill – *Men Who Feed Pigeons* (Bloodaxe Books)  
Luke Kennard – *Notes on the Sonnets* (Penned in the Margins)  
Stephen Sexton – *Cheryl's Destinies* (Penguin Poetry)

**The 2021 Felix Dennis Prize for Best First Collection (£5,000)**

Caleb Femi – *Poor* (Penguin Poetry)  
Alice Hiller – *bird of winter* (Pavillion Poetry)  
Cynthia Miller – *Honorifics* (Nine Arches Press)  
Holly Pester – *Comic Timing* (Granta Poetry)  
Ralf Webb – *Rotten Days in Late Summer* (Penguin Poetry)

**The 2021 Forward Prize for Best Single Poem (£1,000)**

Fiona Benson – 'Androgeus' (*Times Literary Supplement*)  
Natalie Linh Bolderstone – 'Middle Name with Diacritics' (*National Poetry Competition*)  
John McCullough – 'Flower of Sulphur' (*Poetry London*)  
Denise Riley – '1948' (*Poetry Ireland Review*)  
Nicole Sealey – 'Pages 22-29, an excerpt from The Ferguson Report: An Erasure' (*Poetry London*)

The 2021 judging panel is chaired by broadcaster, journalist and writer James Naughtie. He is joined by poets Leontia Flynn, Pascale Petit, and Shivane Ramlochan and by poetry critic Tristram Fane Saunders.

The Forward Prizes are distinctive for championing new voices and internationally renowned poets alike. The Prizes constantly seek out and celebrate work at the cutting edge of the art form. Founded by William Sieghart in 1992, the awards – worth a total of £16,000 – have been sponsored by Bookmark, the global content marketing and communications agency, since their inception. They are run by the Forward Arts Foundation, a charity supported by Arts Council England. Over 30 years the Forward Prizes have lauded some of the most recognised names in poetry including Thom Gunn, Seamus Heaney, Ted Hughes, Carol Ann Duffy and Claudia Rankine.

The 2021 judges' selection of shortlisted and highly commended poems will be published on 16 September 2021 in the annual *Forward Book of Poetry* (Faber & Faber). The Forward Prizes for Poetry will mark this, their 30th anniversary with a new anthology, *Poems of the Decade: An Anthology of the Forward Books of Poetry 2011-2020*. Gathering 100 poems by writers and performers who have drawn new audiences to the artform, it highlights poetry as a space for fresh powerful language, feeling and thought. A previous edition of *Poems of the Decade* featuring poems from 2001-2010, has been an A level English set text on the Edexcel exam board since 2014.

For further information, including interviews with the shortlisted poets, visit [www.forwardartsfoundation.org](http://www.forwardartsfoundation.org) or join the conversation at @forwardprizes #forwardprizes



**Forward  
Prizes  
for Poetry**



**Forward  
Arts  
Foundation**

**BOOKM/ARK**

For Media Enquiries: Dusty Miller PR [dustymillerpr@gmail.com](mailto:dustymillerpr@gmail.com) 07955 904 482  
Forward Arts Foundation [info@forwardartsfoundation.org](mailto:info@forwardartsfoundation.org) 020 7845 4655

## Notes to Editors:

1. **The Forward Prizes for Poetry** are the most widely coveted awards for new poetry published in the UK and Ireland. The annual ceremony brings poetry's biggest names to perform alongside rising talent before diverse and enthusiastic audiences. Notable alumni include Seamus Heaney, Ted Hughes and Claudia Rankine, while Simon Armitage, Jackie Kay, Carol Ann Duffy and Daljit Nagra are among those boosted by early career Forward recognition. The Prizes, run by the Forward Arts Foundation since 1992, are sponsored by Bookmark Content. There are three categories: the Forward Prize for Best Collection, the Felix Dennis Prize for Best First Collection and the Forward Prize for Best Single Poem. Poems from the shortlisted and highly commended books are published in the annual *Forward Book of Poetry* creating an invaluable overview for poetry lovers and a perfect introduction for new poetry readers.

2. **Past winners of the Forward Prize for Best Collection** are: Caroline Bird *The Air Year* (Carcanet) 2020, Fiona Benson *Vertigo & Ghost* (Cape Poetry) 2019, Danez Smith *Don't Call Us Dead* (Chatto & Windus) 2018, Sinéad Morrissey *On Balance* (Carcanet) 2017, Vahni Capildeo *Measures of Expatriation* (Carcanet) 2016, Claudia Rankine *Citizen: An American Lyric* (Penguin) 2015, Kei Miller *The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion* (Carcanet) 2014, Michael Symmons Roberts *Drysalter* (Cape Poetry) 2013, Jorie Graham *PLACE* (Carcanet) 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** is a national charity supported by Arts Council England. The Foundation works towards a better society where individuals and communities can develop innate creativity, agency and understanding through the making and sharing of poetry. Our flagship programmes, National Poetry Day (7 October 2021) and the Forward Prizes for Poetry, enable all to enjoy, discover and share poetry as performers, writers, listeners and readers.

4. **Bookmark Content**, 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.

5. **Biographies of the shortlisted poets** (photos available on request) and samples of their work are on [www.forwardartsfoundation.org/forward-prizes-for-poetry](http://www.forwardartsfoundation.org/forward-prizes-for-poetry)

## Best Collection

**Kayo Chingonyi** (b. 1987, Mufulira, Zambia) moved to the UK aged six after the death of his father. When he was thirteen, he lost his mother, around whose absence many of the poems in *A Blood Condition* (and his debut, *Kumukanda*) revolve. Chingonyi's work is meditative and lyrical - 'It's gratifying to know that the kind of work which is my wheelhouse, which is sometimes considered quiet, subtle, understated, can still resonate', he writes in response to his shortlisting.

For Media Enquiries: Dusty Miller PR [dustymillerpr@gmail.com](mailto:dustymillerpr@gmail.com) 07955 904 482  
Forward Arts Foundation [info@forwardartsfoundation.org](mailto:info@forwardartsfoundation.org) 020 7845 4655

Chingonyi lives in West Yorkshire and teaches Creative Writing at Durham University. Newcastle was his first destination after leaving the Copperbelt of Zambia, and many of the poems in *A Blood Condition* focus on Chingonyi's deft eye for place on the North East of England - 'the part of me / lost to the realm / of ledgers / of legend' ('a northerly aspect').

**Tishani Doshi** (b. 1975, Chennai, India) found her poetic feet while training as a dancer aged twenty six. 'I learned about breath, stamina, flexion, time, rhythm, control, discipline', she writes, 'and I also received the subject that would be the centerpiece of all my explorations: the body'. She has pursued this subject through four full collections, beginning in 2006 with the appropriately titled *Countries of the Body*, winner of the Forward Prize for Best First Collection.

*A God at the Door* continues this focus on embodiment: poems take on the shapes of their subjects, a fir tree, a pair of speedos, an ambiguous 'bird or flower', while in poems like 'Why the Brazilian Butt Lift Won't Save Us', Doshi interrogates beauty norms with caustic, irreverent humour. She lives in a coastal village in Tamil Nadu, where the name of her beachside house, Ar Lan y Môr ('Beside the Sea'), provides a physical expression of her Welsh-Gujarati heritage.

**Selima Hill** (b. 1945, London) builds up her collections from characteristic sequences of short, disturbing lyrics: each a brief glance, then a turning-away, from a central subject: in the case of *Men Who Feed Pigeons*, seven different men and their relationships with women (a companion book with the sexes reversed, *Dressed and Sobbing*, is forthcoming from Bloodaxe in 2023). What redeems her work from bleakness is Hill's knack for manipulating surreal imagery, and her sense of humour, unlike anything else in contemporary British poetry.

Hill was born into a family of artists: 'I am only a writer in as much as I am not a painter or musician like the rest of my family', she writes. 'I thought writing was more cool because it was less public'. Her advice for poets starting out today is pragmatic: 'Sweep the floor; clear the workspace; don't have one more coffee.'

**Luke Kennard** (b. 1981, Kingston-upon-Thames) writes poems which are by turns tender and hilarious, playing with voice and tone; he can be disarmingly self-deprecating, but as Caroline Bird writes, he 'has the uncanny genius of being able to stick a knife in your heart with such originality and verve that you start thinking "aren't knives fascinating... and hearts, my god!" whilst everything slowly goes black.'

*Notes on the Sonnets* is a collection of responses to Shakespeare's sonnets, which forms (in Kennard's words) 'a strange, dreamlike narrative set at the same house party' where he began writing the sequence. He is currently working on another long sequence - *Jonah*, a follow-up to 2016's *Cain*, which Alan Hollinghurst described as 'the cleverest and funniest thing I've read all year'.

**Stephen Sexton** (b. 1988, Belfast) won the Forward Prize for Best First Collection in 2019 for *If All the World and Love Were Young*, which he describes as 'more a project book or concept album' than *Cheryl's Destinies*. 'Generally speaking', he writes, *Cheryl's Destinies* is a collection of poems 'trying to articulate, in some way or another, how the imagination responds to stress, how it comforts and preserves itself'.

This idea of preservation is a central part of Sexton's poetic practice; *Cheryl's Destinies* ends with a long elegy for his early mentor Ciaran Carson, an accumulation of quotidian details and minutiae, trying to hold on to 'those afternoons of etymology / in small back rooms both dishabille and elegant'. Sexton's poems are firmly rooted in the geography and physicality of Belfast, where he was born and still lives.

## Best First Collection

For Media Enquiries: Dusty Miller PR [dustymillerpr@gmail.com](mailto:dustymillerpr@gmail.com) 07955 904 482  
Forward Arts Foundation [info@forwardartsfoundation.org](mailto:info@forwardartsfoundation.org) 020 7845 4655

**Caleb Femi** (b. 1990, Kano, Nigeria) was London's first Young People's Laureate. He is a film-maker and photographer as well as a poet, and his own photos - of the places and faces of the North Peckham Estate, where Femi's imagination finds its jumping-off point - are scattered throughout the pages of *Poor*.

Femi's poetry both bears witness and celebrates resilience in the face of urban poverty; he describes it as 'an endeavour to articulate the lives and times of my community of North Peckham'. This community included the murdered schoolboy Damilola Taylor, whom Femi knew, and to whom one of the central poems in the collection, 'How to Pronounce: Peckham', is dedicated. In an interview with the *Guardian*, Femi describes the contrasts of life on the estate: 'The conditions of the estate – poor public housing, poor design – did have the knock-on effect of being quite dark. But the young people within it are joyous and full of imagination. They embrace fantasy.'

**Alice Hiller** (b. 1964) began writing poetry aged fifty, following treatment for ovarian cancer. 'Being cut open to remove the tumour somehow gave me permission to open up the subject of childhood abuse - which shame and silence had held within me', Hiller writes. 'I wanted to give creative witness to the crime to which I had been subjected.' The result was her debut collection, *bird of winter*.

Hiller is adept at dealing with difficult material: she founded a workshop collective called 'Voicing the Silence' and runs an interview series called 'saying the difficult thing', to encourage other poets writing through similar traumas. Her strategies include transforming found materials from Pompeii and Herculaneum - excavations which become a natural metaphor for her own excavation of her past - and hand-made erasures, 'each made over the course of a single intense day, with multiple redrawings.'

**Cynthia Miller** wrote most of the poems in *Honorifics* during the 'heady first-lockdown blur' of summer 2020, having taken a poetry course which provided rapid-fire daily prompts. 'I tend to have fallow years where I don't write anything at all so I've had to train myself to write rapidly when it does come', she writes. 'Like a horse that's already running away and I'm just hanging onto a fistful of mane for dear life.'

Miller's subject-matter includes motherhood, migration and her mixed Chinese-Malaysian heritage, as well as an electrifying sequence on jellyfish. Like the Metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century, she draws her metaphors from everywhere: popular science, cookbooks, sci-fi films. Describing what she most values in the work of her favourite poets, she mentions a restlessness, an alertness, a sense that you never quite 'know whether you're going to be sucker punched, seduced or startled by the next line.'

**Holly Pester** (b. 1982, Colchester) began writing poetry when she was a receptionist in her early twenties, 'and would do anything to make the time go by'. She went on from there to the East London experimental art and poetry scene, making DIY books for zine bookshops and reading and performing with props including an electric hand-whisk and a homemade harp. 'I've done a lot of things and publications already, sound works, performances, chapbooks, radio works, talks, events, works that have completely disappeared now', Pester writes. 'It's lovely to work in an unprofessional order!'

In a 2019 essay, 'The Politics of Delivery (Against Poet Voice)', Pester describes a radical prosody, one which 'creates spaces and moments for what can be said. The poets I listen out for recreate that space through an insubordinate rhythm against the condition of the day.' *Comic Timing* enacts that description, creating a space for rage, for the 'bodily-yet-politicised experience'.

**Ralf Webb** was managing editor of *The White Review* from 2017 to 2021. *Rotten Days in Late Summer* is constructed around three sequences: 'Diagnostics', about a father's death from cancer and its aftermath, 'Treetops', exploring Webb's own struggles with mental health, and the 'Love Stories', which are scattered throughout the collection and deal with the yearning and pathos of adolescent relationships.

Webb stresses the communitarian aspects of poetry: 'Even if the act of putting pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard) might be done alone, there is so much more that can be done with others to contextualise or inform that act', he writes. His own work in this area includes the Arts Council-funded *PoetryxClass* reading group project, which he set up and ran, focusing on the intersection between poetry and class identities.

### Best Single Poem

**Fiona Benson** (b. 1978, Wroughton) won the Forward Prize for Best Collection in 2019 with *Vertigo & Ghost*, a collection whose central sequence was an astonishingly vivid reworking of Greek myth. Her forthcoming collection from Cape, *Ephemeron*, also features a long mythic sequence, from which her shortlisted poem 'Androgeus' is drawn. 'It is a retelling of the minotaur myth, which tries to reinstate Pasiphaë, the minotaur's mother, at the center of the story', writes Benson. 'Androgeus is her firstborn son, who is killed by a bull in mainland Greece.'

'Androgeus', and the sequence to which it belongs, were written during the first lockdown in 2020. 'I thought at the time that I was indulging in a great act of escapism, travelling in my imagination to sun drenched Greece. But looking back at them they are all about being trapped.'

**Natalie Linh Bolderston** published her first pamphlet, *The Protection of Ghosts*, in 2019. She is currently working on her debut collection, heavily informed by family history: her mother and grandmother were Vietnamese-Chinese refugees who fled to the UK.

'I chose to write about this using my middle name because it's part of my identity — the only part of my name that acknowledges my Vietnamese heritage', she writes. 'Writing about diacritics was also a political choice. In a climate where English is often treated as the superior language and many people are made to suffer for using their native languages, I wanted to resist these racist attitudes by centring and celebrating the beauty and uniqueness of Vietnamese.'

**John McCullough** (b. 1978, Watford) wrote 'Flower of Sulphur' immediately after taking a year off from poetry owing to ill-health after the publication of his third collection, *Reckless Paper Birds*. 'When I returned, I felt suddenly able to tackle areas I'd found too painful to write about before, using experimental forms', he writes.

McCullough's PhD, at the University of Sussex, was on friendship in English renaissance writing; 'Flower of Sulphur' returns to his experience of study, a breakdown, and a friend's suicide. It is self-referential, commenting on its own forms - commonplace book, abecedary, game - while still heartbreakingly direct. 'Poetry for me is a craft and like any craft it takes thousands of hours of quiet honing. There's no way around this', McCullough writes. 'I guess my biggest piece of advice to anyone starting out in poetry is try to enjoy the journey of discovering writers who reshape the way you see the world and each little breakthrough as you refine your editing strategies.'

**Denise Riley** (b. 1948, Carlisle) is a philosopher and feminist theorist as well as an admired poet. She's written eight works of nonfiction, including the influential '*Am I That Name?: Feminism and the Category of "Women" in History*', and in 2012 won the Forward Prize for Best Single Poem with *A Part Song*. Her *Selected Poems* were published in 2019 by Picador.

'The title of my poem '1948' marks a particular patch of British postwar social history; the treatment of 'illegitimate' children by the various authorities concerned', writes Riley. '1948 was the year of my birth; this poem's also a directly personal account – which I feel jumpy about. But despite my strong misgivings, I've tried to brace myself against the exposure of publishing it – because in the current climate of social amnesia,

it may shed some light on half-forgotten institutional systems of 'care' policies and their repercussions, and so it could resonate with the many older people who were similarly and silently affected.'

**Nicole Sealey** began making erasures from the United States Department of Justice's 2015 report detailing bias policing and court practices in the city of Ferguson, Missouri, three years after the murder of Michael Brown by Ferguson police: her shortlisted poem is an excerpt from this much longer work.

Sealey's erasures leave the original report's stilted, bureaucratic language still readable in grey; the flashes of lyric which appear inside it become a commentary on the suffering and lived experience the report suppresses. 'Being shortlisted for the Forward Prizes is a huge honor', writes Sealey. 'This means a larger audience for this work. A larger audience for this work may mean more eyes on The Ferguson Report. More eyes on the Report may mean more honest conversations about bias policing. This is the hope.'

#### 6. About the judges (photos available on request)

**James Naughtie**, one of the country's best-known broadcasters, is special correspondent for BBC News. He has also presented every edition of *Bookclub* on BBC Radio and is a former chair of judges for the Booker Prize and the Baillie Gifford Prize for Nonfiction. He has published books on politics and music, and two novels, and most recently *On the Road - Adventures from Nixon to Trump*, an account of fifty years of travels in the United States.

**Tristram Fane Saunders** is *The Telegraph's* poetry critic, and the editor of *Edna St Vincent Millay: Poems & Satires*. He has reviewed poetry for *the TLS*, *The Herald* and Radio 4's *Front Row*.

**Leontia Flynn** has published four collections of poetry with Jonathan Cape, most recently *The Radio*, which was shortlisted for the T. S. Eliot Prize and won the Irish Times Poetry Prize. She has also received the Forward Prize for Best First Collection, the Rooney Prize for Irish literature and the AWB Vincent American Ireland Fund Literary Award. The Lifeboat Press published her pamphlet of Catullus translations, *Slim New Book*, in 2020. She lives in Belfast and is Reader at the Seamus Heaney Centre at Queen's University.

**Pascale Petit** was born in Paris, grew up in France and Wales and lives in Cornwall. She is of French/Welsh/Indian heritage. Her eighth collection, *Tiger Girl* was shortlisted for the 2020 Forward Prize for Best Collection, and a poem from the book won the Keats-Shelley Poetry Prize. Her previous collection, *Mama Amazonica*, won the inaugural Laurel Prize, the RSL Ondaatje Prize, and was a Poetry Book Society Choice. She has been shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize four times, received a Cholmondeley Award and is a RSL Fellow. Trained as a sculptor at the Royal College of Art, she spent the first part of her life as a visual artist.

**Shivane Ramlochan** is a Trinidadian poet, critic and essayist. Her first collection of poems, *Everyone Knows I Am a Haunting*, was published in 2017 by Peepal Tree Press, and her second book, *Unkillable*, is forthcoming from Noemi Press (2022) as part of their Infidel Poetics series.