

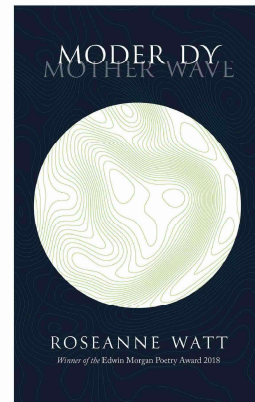
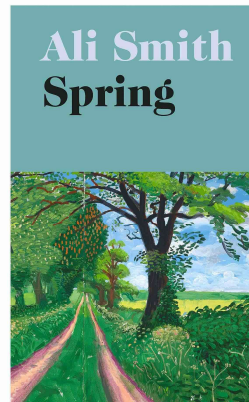
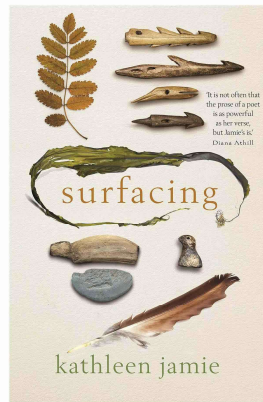
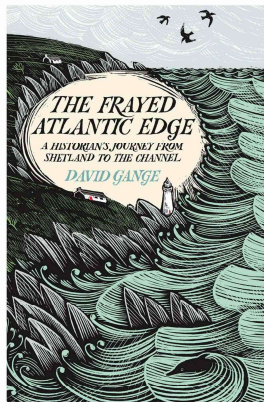


HIGHLAND BOOK PRIZE

DUAIS LEABHAIR NA GÀIDHEALTACHD

2019 HIGHLAND BOOK PRIZE AWARDED COLLECTIVELY TO SHORT-LISTED AUTHORS “AS A CELEBRATION OF LIFE, LITERATURE AND COMMUNITY”

We are thrilled to announce that the joint winners of the 2019 Highland Book Prize are: *The Frayed Atlantic Edge: A Historian's Journey from Shetland to the Channel* by David Gange, *Surfacing* by Kathleen Jamie, *Spring* by Ali Smith, and *Moder Dy* by Roseanne Watt. At the request of the short-listed authors, all four books were collectively awarded the 2019 Highland Book Prize on Saturday 9th May 2020.



The Frayed Atlantic Edge: A Historian's Journey from Shetland to the Channel by David Gange (William Collins)

Surfacing by Kathleen Jamie (Sort of Books)

Spring by Ali Smith (Penguin Random House)

Moder Dy by Roseanne Watt (Polygon)

In a joint statement the authors said: “We were all delighted and honoured to be shortlisted for the Highland Book Prize. We have enjoyed the excitement and the publicity and were all very disappointed that the Ullapool Book Festival had to be cancelled, along with so much else. We are living in extraordinary times, and to reflect this, the four shortlisted authors have decided we'd like to be awarded the prize together and equally as a collective – as a celebration of life, literature and community. Further, we would like to donate our £1000 prize to the Highland Food Bank.”

To hear statements and readings from the judges and some of the winning authors please visit our website:

www.highlandbookprize.org.uk

Last weekend, we were supposed to be at the Ullapool Book Festival, with a glass of Highland hospitality, awaiting the announcement of the winner of the Highland Book Prize. But we are not. We are living in a world of walls where we dance a two-metre rule around our neighbours.

There is solace in the knowledge that literature is a constant. Great books endure and new books are being created all around us. In a time like this, it seems more important than ever to collectively celebrate books that resonate with place and community. With lockdown comes a yearning for a sense of belonging. When we are



HIGHLAND BOOK PRIZE

DUAIS LEABHAIR NA GÀIDHEALTACHD

told to stay indoors, it removes us from our connection to the Highlands or wherever we call home. Therefore, more than ever, we feel extremely grateful to the shortlisted authors and for all the books that were submitted, for bringing this strong sense of place back into our hearts.

The Highland Book Prize celebrates the finest published work which recognises the rich landscape and cultural diversity of the Highlands. This judging is reliant on our community. The first round of judging saw 105 volunteer readers devoting their time to critique the 80 submitted titles. Without this dedicated reading panel, we would not be able to take on the task of shortlisting. Over the last few weeks, new volunteer readers have offered their support. We are extremely grateful and feel honoured that we can bring people closer to the Highlands while they are physically unable to travel here. It's hoped that the broad nature of the prize, being open to so many different types of creative works including fact, fiction, poetry, memoir, environmental science, nature, adventure, history and much more offers a way to engage with the Highlands from many perspectives.

When the coronavirus pandemic hit us, life changed in a matter of days. In amongst the confusion, we were bowled over when the shortlisted authors approached us with an idea: to be awarded the prize together and equally as a collective, as a celebration of life, literature and community. This is absolutely the spirit of the times; collectively we are stronger in the face of this unique challenge.

Furthermore, our joint winners have donated the prize money to the Highland Food Bank, supporting families across the Highlands. We wholeheartedly thank the authors for their generosity. Every year at this time, it feels special to announce the winner of the Highland Book Prize, but this year will be unique: a celebration of connection in a time of isolation.

Alex Ogilvie, Highland Book Prize judge and trustee of the Highland Society of London said, "This is a wonderful decision by the authors – on the one hand reminding us that in this time of crisis, we need to stand together and act together; and on the other hand, ensuring that the prize money is donated to those who really need it. At the same time, I want to thank all of the volunteer readers, authors, publishers, bookshops and many others who have participated in the 2019 Highland Book Prize process – you are all part of this collective and generous contribution." Alex Ogilvie.

Kevin MacNeil, author and member of the judging panel said, "Compassion, selflessness and integrity are not only exemplified by the authors in their gesture of generosity and camaraderie, those qualities are also evident in four books that are at once timely and timeless. For anyone self-isolating, reading these books will provide the most engaging, thought-provoking and rewarding of activities. Each of the four winning books is uniquely brilliant, but in their diversity - incorporating poetry, fiction, essays, narrative non-fiction - they offer an enthralling and enduring collection. I think it no exaggeration to say that this was the strongest shortlist the Highland Book Prize has had to date, and in exceptional times it is gratifying to affirm that they are all winners. These are books I loved and will remember and to which I will keep returning." Kevin MacNeil

Joan Michael, chair of the Ullapool Book Festival said, "What wonderful generosity of spirit from the four shortlisted writers. Their decision is very much in line with Ullapool Book Festival's ethos. We are only sad that we won't have the opportunity to hear them read live at the planned UBF session – but we can still get pleasure from re-reading their books. I loved all four of them. Ullapool Book Festival will be back for its postponed 16th festival on 7-9 May 2021 when we look forward to hosting the next Highland Book Prize once again." Joan Michael.



HIGHLAND BOOK PRIZE

DUAIS LEABHAIR NA GÀIDHEALTACHD

Mirren Rosie, Coordinator at the Highland Book Prize said, “We are delighted with the result. We began 2019 with a community of critical readers and we end with a collective of extremely talented writers. If you would like to join the reading panel for the 2020 Highland Book Prize this summer, you can apply through our website.”

Mirren Rosie.

The Highland Book Prize, established in 2017, aims to showcase the literary talent of the region and to raise the profile of work created in or about the Highlands. Presented by the Highland Society of London, the Highland Book Prize is facilitated by Moniack Mhor Creative Writing Centre in partnership with the Ullapool Book Festival. The William Grant Foundation provides funding to encourage public engagement with the Highland Book Prize.

Prize facilitators Moniack Mhor distributed over 80 submitted books to a panel of over 100 volunteer readers, collating the feedback to establish a longlist of 11 titles. These titles were judged by a panel comprising Kevin MacNeil, author and playwright; Alex Ogilvie, trustee of the Highland Society of London, who have funded the Prize; and Liz Beer, secretary of the Ullapool Book Festival. The panel worked professionally and sensitively to select the shortlist, creating a list that includes both fiction and non-fiction – and also, for the first time, poetry.

The 2020 Highland Book Prize will open for entries this summer. Volunteer readers who wish to participate in the initial longlisting process are invited to sign up on the website.

www.highlandbookprize.org.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

Moniack Mhor is Scotland’s National Writing Centre. Based in Scottish Highlands, just a stone’s throw from Loch Ness, it runs residential creative writing courses in a range of genres tutored by some of the finest authors in the UK and beyond. The centre also offers year-round writing retreats providing time and space for progressing work, awards for writers, professional residencies and a programme for young writers. It is a registered charity and supported by Creative Scotland as a Regularly Funded Organisation.

www.moniackmhor.org.uk

The Highland Society of London is a charity, which exists to promote and support the traditions and culture of the Highlands of Scotland, whilst maintaining a Membership of individuals to support the Society’s activities.

<http://highlandsocietyoflondon.org/index.php>

The first Ullapool Book Festival was held in May 2005. It was founded by a group of literary enthusiasts in Ullapool Entertainments, the local voluntary arts organisation founded in 1982.

<http://www.ullapoolbookfestival.co.uk/index.htm>

The family shareholders of William Grant & Sons established the William Grant Foundation in 2014 as a non-profit association to oversee and direct their charitable donations. The William Grant Foundation is committed to a future where everyone in Scotland has the opportunity to thrive, a belief that is deeply rooted in the core values shared by the family and the company.

www.williamgrantfoundation.org.uk