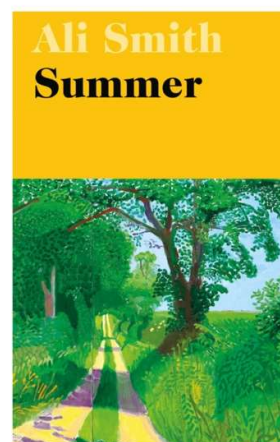
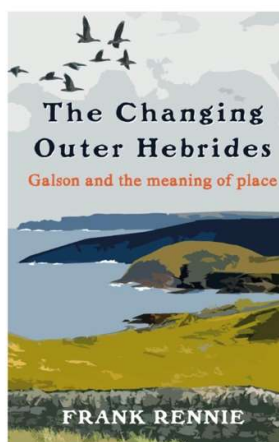
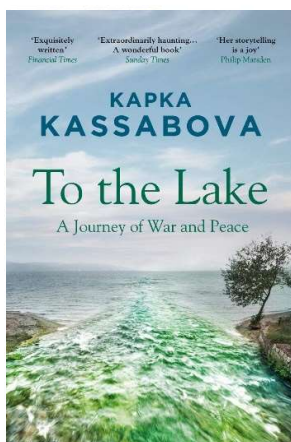
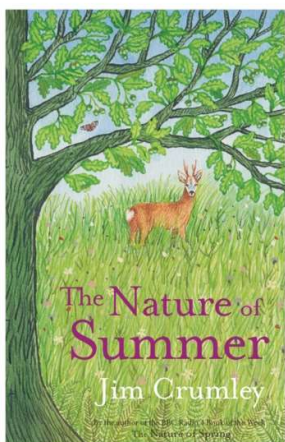




## HIGHLAND BOOK PRIZE DUAIS LEABHAIR NA GÀIDHEALTACHD

Monday 22 March 2021



### ANNOUNCING THE SHORTLIST FOR THE 2020 HIGHLAND BOOK PRIZE

**4 titles are shortlisted for the Highlands' only annual book prize –**

PRIZE ORGANISERS are delighted to announce that the four books that have been selected for the 2020 Highland Book Prize shortlist are:

***The Nature of Summer* by Jim Crumley**, published by Saraband (nature and environment).

***To The Lake: A Journey of War and Peace* by Kapka Kassabova**, published by Granta (memoir, reportage, travel).

***The Changing Outer Hebrides: Galson and the Meaning of Place* by Frank Rennie**, published by Acair Books (history and nature).

***Summer* by Ali Smith**, published by Hamish Hamilton (fiction).

The Highland Book Prize was established in 2017 to help celebrate the finest work that recognises the rich culture, heritage and landscape of the Highlands. The Prize 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 Moniac Mhor Writers' Centre in partnership with the Ullapool Book Festival. The William Grant Foundation provides funding to encourage public engagement with the Highland Book Prize.

The first round of judging was completed in October by a panel of 145 volunteer readers who spent last summer immersed in fiction, poetry, memoir, history, nature, crime, young adult and Gaelic titles. Over the winter months our panel of expert judges have enjoyed reading and rereading the 13 longlisted books, and it



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has taken considerable consideration and deliberation to refine the longlist down to just 4 fantastic titles. Our sincere thanks go to judges: novelist and poet Kevin MacNeil; poet Jen Hadfield; Senior Lecturer in Gaelic Language and Culture at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, Mark Wringe; and panel chair Alex Ogilvie of the Highland Society of London.

Our longest standing judge, Kevin MacNeil, describes why you should reach for a copy of all four shortlisted books this spring...

*The Nature of Summer* by Jim Crumley, published by Saraband:- “Crumley makes Summer - my favourite season - more enjoyable still, due to his lively writing, attentive mind and provocative insights. He makes a concept as vast as the environment suddenly intimate and beguiling. Crumley's powers of empathy and observation combine to create a beautiful and lasting book.”

*To The Lake: A Journey of War and Peace* by Kapka Kassabova, published by Granta:- “Kassabova takes us on a most intelligent, honest, lyrical and enlightening journey. She writes in an immersive and engaging manner that is at once stylistically impressive and deliciously characterful. Like *Border*, Kassabova's *To The Lake* is a major addition to European bookshelves.”

*The Changing Outer Hebrides: Galson and the Meaning of Place* by Frank Rennie, published by Acair Books:- “A book that shows us the life-enhancing joys of understanding – truly understanding – what a particular place is and means. Rennie's clear-eyed, well-researched writing shows us that we are not only who we are but where we are. Scotland has traditionally been marginalised, othered, overlooked and misunderstood; this book reverses those iniquities.”

*Summer* by Ali Smith, published by Hamish Hamilton:- “Ever inventive, yet always distinctive, Smith's epic quartet of 'season' books have come to scrutinise, dramatise, summarise and immortalise the times in which we live. Her ambitious project concludes with an outstanding work about change, actuality and forgiveness. What an achievement!”

Rachel Humphries, Centre Director at Moniac Mhor Writers' Centre stated that “the run up to announcing the shortlist this year has been really engaging. We have hosted an online event with many of the longlisted authors and it has been a fantastic way to demonstrate the diversity, quality and experience of the writers who engaged in the programme. It is wonderful to see household names such as Ali Smith and Robin Robertson sharing the longlist accolade with debut novelists such as Francine Toon. We have connected with an audience of over 350 including other professional writers, agents and industry professionals through this series and I hope that it's gone some way to raising the profile of all of the longlisted books. I would like to thank and congratulate all involved. The Highlands are underpinned by community and this is a community prize, working with a wide panel of voluntary readers and these events have truly emulated this concept on so many levels. I cannot think of a better way of celebrating literature connected with the Highlands at this



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time. Of course, it is still a prize and I am thrilled that we now have a stellar shortlist. I wish all authors the best of luck with the next stage.”

If you missed any of the 2020 Highland Book Prize Longlist Series of talks and conversations you can view them at – [www.moniackmhor.org.uk/writers/moniack-mhor-tea-break](http://www.moniackmhor.org.uk/writers/moniack-mhor-tea-break) and [www.highlandbookprize.org.uk/events](http://www.highlandbookprize.org.uk/events)

The winner of the 2020 Highland Book Prize will be announced at the Ullapool Book Festival, May 2021, and will be awarded £1000 prize money and a week’s writing retreat at Moniack Mhor Creative Writing Centre. Please follow us on social media and check our website to keep up with announcements.

**For further information please contact Mirren Rosie, Coordinator of the Highland Book Prize.**

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Visit: [www.highlandbookprize.org.uk](http://www.highlandbookprize.org.uk)

Twitter: @highlandbook1  
Instagram: @highlandbookprize  
Facebook: @highlandbookprize

**[ENDS]**

**High Resolution images and a summary of each book are available on request.**

### NOTES TO EDITORS

Moniack Mhor is Scotland’s National Writing Centre. Based in the Scottish Highlands, it offers a wide writer development programme including residential courses in a range of genres, tutored by some of the finest authors in the UK and beyond. Other support offered by Moniack Mhor includes retreats, professional residencies, workshops and bursaries, enhancing access by assisting with course fees. The centre also runs a programme for young writers. It is a charitable organisation and supported by Creative Scotland as a Regular Funded Organisation.

[www.moniackmhor.org.uk](http://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. [www.highlandsocietyoflondon.org](http://www.highlandsocietyoflondon.org)

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.

[www.ullapoolbookfestival.co.uk](http://www.ullapoolbookfestival.co.uk)



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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](http://www.williamgrantfoundation.org.uk)

**The longlist was announced in November 2020.**

