

# GORDON BURN PRIZE

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## Shortlist announced for the Gordon Burn Prize 2022

Five titles have been shortlisted for the Gordon Burn Prize 2022, a celebration of the year's boldest and most innovative fiction and non-fiction.

The 2022 shortlist was selected by the judges, sportswriter and columnist Jonathan Liew, author Denise Mina (chair), broadcaster Stuart Maconie, artist and poet Heather Phillipson and writer Chitra Ramaswamy.

The judges will also be selecting the winning title, to be announced at Durham Book Festival on Thursday 13 October.

Founded in 2012, the Gordon Burn Prize has, over the past decade, built a reputation for identifying and celebrating brilliant works that often find their readers outside of the mainstream. The prize covers both fiction and non-fiction, recognising writing that often pushes boundaries, crosses genres, or otherwise challenges readers' expectations.

This year's shortlist includes memoir, creative non-fiction, true crime and fiction in works that are expansive in form and ambition, and unflinchingly explore themes from radical compassion to the nature of sanity to the duty that comes with freedom.

The prize is run in partnership by the Gordon Burn Trust, New Writing North, Faber & Faber and Durham Book Festival, a Durham County Council festival. It remembers the Newcastle-born writer Gordon Burn, who died in 2009, and seeks to celebrate those who follow in his footsteps. A journalist and author of ten books, Burn's work includes the novels *Alma Cogan* and *Born Yesterday: The News as a Novel* and non-fiction titles *Pocket Money: Inside the World of Snooker* and *Happy Like Murderers: The Story of Fred and Rosemary West*.

The winner of the Gordon Burn Prize will receive £5,000 and the chance to undertake a three-month retreat at Gordon Burn's cottage in the Scottish Borders.

### The Gordon Burn Prize 2022 shortlist is:

*About a Son* (Phoenix), David Whitehouse

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*Aftermath* (And Other Stories), Preti Taneja

*Case Study* (Saraband), Graeme Macrae Burnet

*Constructing a Nervous System* (Granta), Margo Jefferson

*Free: Coming of Age at the End of History* (Allen Lane), Lea Ypi

**On selecting the shortlist, Denise Mina said:** 'This has been a very strong year for entrants for this prize, which rewards the sort of experimental writing Gordon Burn's own work exemplified. It has been a privilege and a joy to read these books, thrilling and surprising in turn. Each and every book on the shortlist more than deserves its place.'

**Jonathan Liew said:** 'I know it's the oldest judging cliché in the book to say that the overall standard was extremely high and it was it a devilishly difficult process to pick a shortlist. Nevertheless: it really was a devilishly difficult process picking a shortlist, not least because the overall standard was extremely high. Congratulations to all involved.'

**Heather Phillipson said:** 'Reading the Gordon Burn shortlist was a form of space-time travel. Every book changed my brain's air pressure. I have returned fizzed up and worldlier.'

**Cllr Elizabeth Scott, Durham County Council's Cabinet member for economy and partnerships, said:** 'We are once again proud to host this prestigious competition as part of Durham Book Festival. The Gordon Burn Prize rightly recognises authors who have created spectacular work and this year is no different. We wish all of those shortlisted the very best of luck and look forward to the winner being announced this autumn.'

-- ENDS --

**For all media enquiries, including high-res images and interview requests, please contact Laura Fraine, Senior Marketing and Communications Manager, New Writing North: [laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com](mailto:laurafraine@newwritingnorth.com) or 07411 164 837.**

## NOTES TO EDITORS

### ABOUT THE SHORTLISTED TITLES

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## ***About a Son (Phoenix)* by David Whitehouse**

A moving exploration of love and loss. Part true crime, part memoir, it tells the story of the shocking murder in 2015 of twenty-year-old Morgan Hehir in Nuneaton, of the emotional repercussions and the failures that enabled it to take place. David Whitehouse is the award-winning author of three acclaimed novels and is a journalist and screenwriter. He is originally from Nuneaton.

## ***Aftermath (And Other Stories)* by Preti Taneja**

Usman Khan was a convicted terrorist who, on release from prison, went on to kill two people. Preti Taneja had taught Kahn in prison – one of his victims was her colleague. This book is an attempt to rebuild faith in human compassion and a recommitment to activism and radical hope. Preti Taneja's first novel, *We That Are Young*, won the Desmond Elliot Prize. She is a professor of World Literature and Creative Writing at Newcastle University.

## ***Case Study (Saraband)* by Graeme Macrae Burnet**

A twisting and often wickedly humorous work of crime fiction that meditates on the nature of sanity, identity and truth itself. Graeme Macrae Burnet is the author of four novels, including the Booker Prize-shortlisted *His Bloody Project*, and lives in Scotland.

## ***Constructing a Nervous System (Granta)* by Margo Jefferson**

This intimate and innovative memoir shows how, from Josephine Baker's radiant transformations, to Willa Cather's aesthetics of whiteness, we can find space in cultures that will not make room for us. Margo Jefferson is a Pulitzer Prize-winning critic and the author of the celebrated memoir *Negroland*. She lives in the USA.

## ***Free: Coming of Age at the End of History (Allen Lane)* by Lea Ypi**

An engrossing memoir of coming of age amid political upheaval in Albania, one of the most isolated countries on earth, where communist ideals had officially replaced religion. In 1990, the fall of the Berlin Wall changed everything, and Lea found herself questioning what freedom really meant. Lea Ypi is a professor of Political Theory at the London School of Economics.

GORDON BURN PRIZE LONGLIST 2022 (announced 29 June 2022)

*About a Son (Phoenix)*, David Whitehouse  
*Aftermath (And Other Stories)*, Preti Taneja  
*Case Study (Saraband)*, Graeme Macrae Burnet  
*Companion Piece (Hamish Hamilton)*, Ali Smith

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*Constructing a Nervous System* (Granta), Margo Jefferson  
*Free: Coming of Age at the End of History* (Allen Lane), Lea Ypi  
*Keeping the House* (And Other Stories), Tice Cin  
*Oxblood* (Bloomsbury), Tom Benn  
*The Perfect Golden Circle* (Bloomsbury Circus), Benjamin Myers  
*Scary Monsters* (Atlantic), Michelle de Kretser  
*Wayward* (White Rabbit), Vashti Bunyan  
*Your Show* (Faber), Ashley Hickson-Lovence

## PREVIOUS WINNERS OF THE GORDON BURN PRIZE

2021 *A Little Devil in America: Notes in Praise of Black Performance*, Hanif Abdurraqib  
2020 *This Is Not Propaganda*, Peter Pomerantsev  
2019 *For the Good Times*, David Keenan  
2018 *Census*, Jesse Ball  
2017 *The Long Drop*, Denise Mina  
2016 *All That Man Is*, David Szalay  
2015 *In Plain Sight: The Life and Lies of Jimmy Savile*, Dan Davies  
2014 *The Wake*, Paul Kingsnorth  
2013 *Pig Iron*, Benjamin Myers

The prize is open to works in English published between 1 July 2021 and 1 July 2022 by writers of any nationality.