



**The Royal Society  
of Literature**

*The  
Encore  
Award*

## **The Royal Society of Literature's Encore Award 2018: the shortlist**

The Encore Award presents £10,000 to the best second novel of the year.

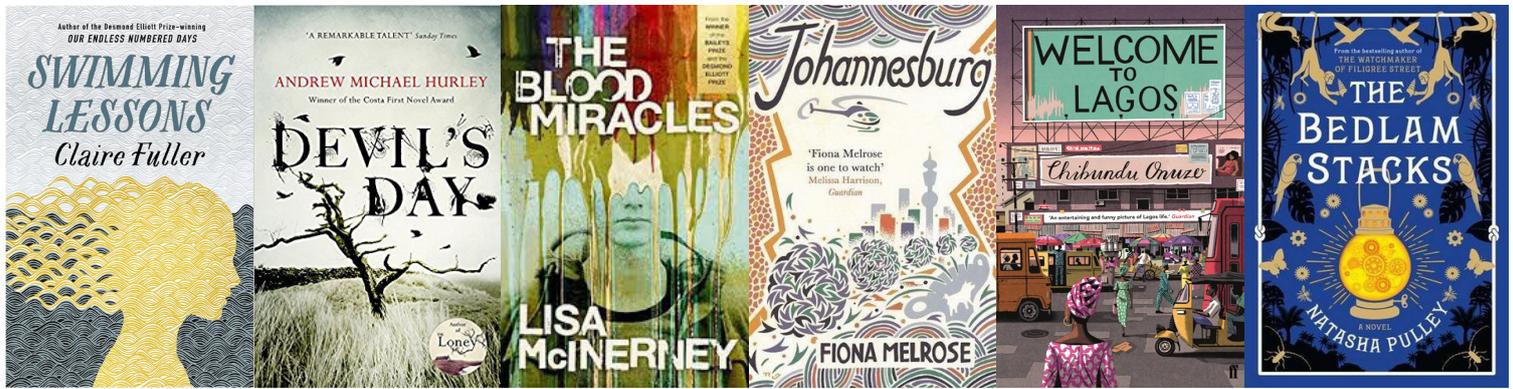
The judges, Alex Clark, Julia Copus and Ted Hodgkinson comment:

'Once more, we were impressed and delighted by the sheer quality of the submissions - particularly their range of subject matter, and the writers' willingness to innovate and to imagine new ways of telling stories. Our shortlist takes us from a menacing rural England to the noise and frantic modernity of Lagos, destination for a group of disparate travellers; from the hustlers and grifters of Cork City to a crumbling beach house filled with decaying books and a ruptured family; from tales of 19th-century derring-do to a South Africa on the brink of huge change. Here are the gothic, the comic, the epic, the domestic, the romantic and the picaresque, each with a thrilling new voice's stamp on it.'

### **2018 shortlist**

Claire Fuller	<b><i>Swimming Lessons</i></b>	(Fig Tree)
Andrew Michael Hurley	<b><i>Devil's Day</i></b>	(John Murray)
Lisa McLnerney	<b><i>The Blood Miracles</i></b>	(John Murray)
Fiona Melrose	<b><i>Johannesburg</i></b>	(Corsair)
Chibundu Onuzo	<b><i>Welcome To Lagos</i></b>	(Faber & Faber)
Natasha Pulley	<b><i>The Bedlam Stacks</i></b>	(Bloomsbury Circus)

**The winner will be announced by A. L. Kennedy on Wednesday 9 May 2018.**



### **Claire Fuller, *Swimming Lessons* (Fig Tree)**

‘The powerful emotional undertow running through this tale of marital breakdown and familial survival never wavers as Flora, the youngest daughter of a narcissistic writer, attempts to piece together the truth about her mother’s disappearance via the discovery of a cache of letters distributed among the pages of her parents’ books.’ - Julia Copus

**Claire Fuller** is a novelist and short fiction writer. Her first novel, *Our Endless Numbered Days*, won the 2015 Desmond Elliott Prize for debut fiction, and was longlisted for the International Dublin Literary Award in 2016. It was also nominated for the Edinburgh First Book Award 2015.

### **Andrew Michael Hurley, *Devil's Day* (John Murray)**

‘There is an all-consuming sense of the nearness of evil in *Devil's Day*. As schoolteacher John Pentecost returns with his wife, Kat, to his childhood home in the remote ‘Endlands’ farming country, he finds himself drawn back into the sinister rituals of an inward-looking community, and refuses to acknowledge his wife’s misgivings in a milieu that is utterly alien to her. The result is a powerfully immersive tale in the very best manner of modern English gothic.’ - Julia Copus

**Andrew Michael Hurley’s** debut novel, *The Loney*, won the Costa First Novel Award 2015 and went on to be named Debut of the Year and Overall Book of the Year at the British Book Industry Awards in May 2016. Andrew Michael Hurley joined Manchester Metropolitan University as Lecturer in Creative Writing (Fiction) in 2016.

### **Lisa McInerney, *The Blood Miracles* (John Murray)**

‘Descending deep into Cork’s criminal underworld, *The Blood Miracles* shows us surprising moments of revelation on the way down. McInerney’s potent prose illuminates euphoric highs and brutal lows, to reveal lives touched by transcendence. This is a follow up which stands alone by a writer of immense powers.’ - Ted Hodgkinson

**Lisa McInerney’s** work has featured on BBC Radio 4 and in various anthologies. Her debut novel, *The Glorious Heresies*, won the 2016 Baileys Women’s Prize for Fiction and the 2016 Desmond Elliott Prize. It was shortlisted for an Irish Book Award, longlisted for the 2016 Dylan Thomas Award, and named as a book of the year by *The Irish Times*, *Sunday Independent* and *Sunday Business Post*.

### **Fiona Melrose, *Johannesburg* (Corsair)**

‘*Johannesburg* pays homage to Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*: set during a single day, the novel is full of the apprehension that precedes a social occasion, bubbling away against the backdrop of momentous public events, as Gin returns home to South Africa just as the news of Nelson Mandela’s death is announced. Melrose’s skill at blending both personal and political landscapes caught in a time of change and challenge is completely captivating.’ - Alex Clark

**Fiona Melrose** was born in Johannesburg, South Africa and has spent much of her adult life in the UK, London and Suffolk in particular. Her debut novel, *Midwinter*, was longlisted for the 2017 Baileys Women’s Prize for Fiction, and shortlisted for the New Angle Prize.

### **Chibundu Onuzo, *Welcome To Lagos* (Faber & Faber)**

‘Charting the unlikely convergence of five disparate characters, *Welcome to Lagos* is a witty and wide-ranging examination of manners, morals and making it in a megacity. Onuzo traces souls in flight from their separate troubles who share a common dream, and shows with stark clarity the perils and precariousness of living on the margins of an often unforgiving city.’ - Ted Hodgkinson

**Chibundu Onuzo** was born in Lagos, Nigeria. Her debut novel, *The Spider King’s Daughter*, won a Betty Trask Award and was shortlisted for the Dylan Thomas Prize and the Commonwealth Book Prize. She is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in History at King’s College London.

### **Natasha Pulley, *The Bedlam Stacks* (Bloomsbury Circus)**

‘Pulley’s spirited, imaginative recreation of the world of the 19th-century explorer is absorbing to the nth degree. But, naturally, Merrick Tremayne’s expedition to Peru on the trail of a cure for malaria yields far more strangeness than he could have anticipated - not least buried secrets that lead him back to his own family. Pulley manages to bring to life a whole slice of imperial history and the role it plays in British cultural identity.’ - Alex Clark

**Natasha Pulley** was a Writer in Residence at Gladstone’s Library and is now Associate Lecturer at Bath Spa University and Tutor at the Cambridge University Institute of Continuing Education. Her first novel, *The Watchmaker of Filigree Street*, won a Betty Trask Award and was shortlisted for the Authors’ Club Best First Novel Award.

**The Encore Award** was first presented in 1990 to celebrate the achievement of outstanding second novels. This year’s judges are critic, journalist and broadcaster Alex Clark (Chair), poet and children’s author Julia Copus and Ted Hodgkinson, Senior Programmer for Literature and Spoken Word at Southbank Centre. The Award is administered by the RSL.

**The Royal Society of Literature**, founded in 1820, is the national charity for the advancement of literature. It celebrates and nurtures all that is best in British literature, past and present. In addition to the Encore Award, the RSL administers the RSL Ondaatje Prize for writing on a sense of place, the RSL Literature Matters Awards and the V.S. Pritchett Short Story Prize. The RSL runs regular events and manages a schools outreach programme.

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