

PRESS RELEASE

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The
2021
International
Booker
Prize

David Diop and Anna Moschovakis win the 2021 International Booker Prize with *At Night All Blood Is Black*

[International Booker Prize](#) | @TheBookerPrizes
#InternationalBooker2021 #FinestFiction
Images of the winning author, translator and book available [here](#)

- David Diop's *At Night All Blood is Black* was shortlisted for 10 major prizes in France and has already won the Prix Goncourt des Lycéens and the Swiss Prix Ahmadou Korouma
- Independent publisher Pushkin Press is publisher of the winning novel
- Diop is the first French author to win the prize
- Diop took inspiration from his Senegalese great grandfather's silence about his experiences in World War I

At Night All Blood is Black, written by David Diop and translated from French by Anna Moschovakis, is today, 2 June, announced as the winner of the 2021 International Booker Prize. The £50,000 prize will be split between David Diop and Anna Moschovakis, giving the author and translator equal recognition. The winner was announced by chair of the judges, Lucy Hughes-Hallett, this evening, during a virtual celebration from Coventry Cathedral, which was streamed across The Booker Prizes Facebook and YouTube pages.

Born in 1966 in Paris, David Diop is the first French author to win the International Booker Prize. Raised in Senegal, he now lives in France, where he is a professor of 18th-century literature at the University of Pau. *At Night All Blood is Black* is Diop's second novel. The French edition of the novel, *Frère d'âme*, was shortlisted for 10 major prizes in France and won the Prix Goncourt des Lycéens as well as the Swiss Prix Ahmadou Korouma. It is currently being translated into 13 languages and has already won the Strega European Prize in Italy.

Anna Moschovakis is a poet, author and translator, whose works include the James Laughlin Award-winning poetry collection *You and Three Others Are Approaching a Lake* and a novel, *Eleanor: or, The Rejection of the Progress of Love*. Her translations from French include Albert Cossery's *The Jokers*, Annie Ernaux's *The Possession*, and Bresson on Bresson.

At Night All Blood is Black portrays a young man's descent into madness and tells the little-known story of the Senegalese who fought for France on the Western Front during World War I. After his best friend is mortally wounded in combat, Alfa, the protagonist, is alone amidst the savagery of the trenches, far from all he knows and cherishes. He throws himself into fighting with renewed vigour, but soon begins to frighten even his own comrades.

The New York Times described *At Night All Blood Is Black* as 'more than a lone man's spiritual burden. Diop realizes the full nature of war – that theatre of macabre and violent drama – on the page. He takes his character into the depths of hell and lets him thrive there.' *The Spectator* said 'with elegant brevity, Diop presents a world with no firm dividing line between courage and madness, murder and warfare; the most dedicated killers are awarded the Croix de Guerre.' Angelique Chrisafis commented in the *Guardian* that the novel 'addresses a story woefully absent from French history books.'

At Night All Blood is Black was chosen from a shortlist of six books during a lengthy and rigorous judging process, by a panel of five judges, chaired by Lucy Hughes-Hallett, cultural historian and novelist. The panel also included: journalist and writer Aida Edemariam; Man Booker shortlisted novelist, Neel Mukherjee; Professor of the History of Slavery, Olivette Otele; and poet, translator and biographer, George Szirtes.

Lucy Hughes-Hallett, chair of the judges, says:

'This story of warfare and love and madness has a terrifying power. The protagonist is accused of sorcery, and there is something uncanny about the way the narrative works on the reader. We judges agreed that its incantatory prose and dark, brilliant vision had jangled our emotions and blown our minds. That it had cast a spell on us.'

The International Booker Prize is awarded every year for a single book that is translated into English and published in the UK or Ireland. It aims to encourage more publishing and reading of quality fiction from all over the world and to promote the work of translators. Both novels and short-story collections are eligible. The contribution of author and translator is given equal recognition, with the £50,000 prize split between them. Each shortlisted author and translator will receive £1,000, bringing the total value of the prize to £62,000.

This year the judges considered 125 books.

Together, the two Booker Prizes reward the best fiction from around the globe that is published in English in the UK and Ireland.

The Booker Prizes are sponsored by Crankstart, a charitable foundation.

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The Winner:

At Night All Blood is Black

David Diop

Translated by Anna Moschovakis from French

Published by Pushkin Press

Publisher's synopsis:

At Night All Blood is Black captures the tragedy of a young man's mind hurtling towards madness and tells the little-heard story of the Senegalese who fought for France on the Western Front during the First World War.

Alfa Ndiaye and Mademba Diop are two of the many Senegalese *tirailleurs* fighting in the Great War under the French flag. Whenever Captain Armand blows his whistle they climb out of their trenches to attack the blue-eyed enemy. But one day Mademba is mortally wounded, and without his friend, his more-than-brother, Alfa is alone amidst the savagery of the trenches, far from all he knows and holds dear. He throws himself into combat with renewed vigour, but soon begins to scare even his own comrades in arms.

David Diop was born in February 1966 in Paris, France, and grew up in Senegal. He now lives in France, where he is a professor of 18th-century literature at the University of Pau. *At Night All Blood is Black* is Diop's second novel. It was shortlisted for 10 major prizes in France and won the Prix Goncourt des Lycéens as well as the Swiss Prix Ahmadou Korouma. It is currently being translated into 13 languages and has already won the Strega European Prize in Italy.

Anna Moschovakis was born in September 1970 in Los Angeles, California, USA. She is a poet, author and translator, whose works include the James Laughlin Award-winning poetry collection *You and Three Others Are Approaching a Lake* and a novel, *Eleanor: or, The Rejection of the Progress of Love*. Her translations from French include Albert Cossery's *The Jokers*, Annie Ernaux's *The Possession*, and *Bresson on Bresson*. She lives in South Kortright, New York.

Notes to Editors

- Please find all images of authors, translators and book jackets [here](#).
- The 2021 winner was chosen from a shortlist of six books:

Title	Author	Translator	Original language	Author residence	Publisher or Imprint
<i>At Night All Blood is Black</i>	David Diop	Anna Moschovakis	French	France	Pushkin Press

<i>The Dangers of Smoking in Bed</i>	Mariana Enríquez	Megan McDowell	Spanish	Argentina	Granta Books
<i>When We Cease to Understand the World</i>	Benjamín Labatut	Adrian Nathan West	Spanish	Chile	Pushkin Press
<i>The Employees</i>	Olga Ravn	Martin Aitken	Danish	Denmark	Lolli Editions
<i>In Memory of Memory</i>	Maria Stepanova	Sasha Dugdale	Russian	Russia	Fitzcarraldo Editions
<i>The War of the Poor</i>	Éric Vuillard	Mark Polizzotti	French	France	Pan Macmillan, Picador

- The International Booker Prize is awarded annually for the best single work of fiction translated into English and published in the UK and Ireland. The £50,000 prize is divided equally between the author and the translator. Each shortlisted author and translator receives £1,000. The 2020 winner was *The Discomfort of Evening*, written by Marieke Lucas Rijneveld and translated by Michele Hutchison, which has sold over 50,000 copies of the UK edition and is being translated into 40 languages.
- The Administrator of The International Booker Prize is Fiammetta Rocco - chief culture writer of *The Economist* and *1843*. The Director of The Booker Prize Foundation is Gaby Wood.
- Books under consideration are published in translation into English by UK or Irish publishers between 1 May 2020 and 30 April 2021.
- The Booker Prize for Fiction was first awarded in 1969 and was called The Man Booker Prize for Fiction when sponsored by Man Group from 2002 - 2018. The winner receives £50,000. The 2020 winner was *Shuggie Bain* by Douglas Stuart. The 2021 Booker Prize panel is chaired by historian Maya Jasanoff and consists of: writer and editor Horatia Harrod; actor Natascha McElhone; twice Booker-shortlisted novelist and professor Chigozie Obioma; and writer and former Archbishop Rowan Williams.
- For a full history of both prizes including previous winners, shortlisted authors and judges visit the website: www.thebookerprizes.com
- The Booker Prize Foundation is a registered charity (no 1090049) established in 2002. It is responsible for the award of The Booker Prize for Fiction and for The International Booker Prize. The trustees of the Booker Prize Foundation are: Mark Damazer (chair) - freelance journalist and former broadcast executive; Nick Barley - director, Edinburgh International Book Festival; Bidisha SK Mamata - writer, critic and broadcaster; Carol Lake - managing director, Philanthropy Executive at JPMorgan Chase; Ben Okri - poet and author; MT Rainey - strategist, agency founder and social entrepreneur; Professor Louise Richardson - vice chancellor of the University of Oxford; Nicki Sheard - digital and social media executive;

The Rt Hon. Lord Willetts - writer, former minister and advocate of fairness between the generations.

- The Booker Prize Foundation Advisory Committee, which advises on any changes to the rules and on the selection of the judges, represents all aspects of the book world. Its members are: Nic Bottomley - co-founder, Mr B's Emporium of Reading Delights; Jamie Byng - publisher, Canongate Books; Lamia Dabboussy - executive editor, BBC Arts; James Daunt - managing director of Waterstones; Jonathan Douglas CBE - director of the National Literacy Trust; Adam Freudenheim - publisher, Pushkin Press; Daniel Hahn OBE - writer and translator; Peter Kemp - chief fiction reviewer, *The Sunday Times*; Sharmaine Lovegrove - publisher, Dialogue Books; Emma Paterson - agent, Aitken Alexander Associates; Fiammetta Rocco - senior editor and culture correspondent, *The Economist* and *1843* and The International Booker Prize Administrator; Eve Smith - Secretary, Booker Prize Foundation; Boyd Tonkin - writer and critic; Helen Williams - Legal Counsel of Booker Group plc. It is chaired by Gaby Wood - Director, Booker Prize Foundation.
- Crankstart, a charitable foundation, is the exclusive funder of The Booker Prize and The International Booker Prize.
- Four Culture handles PR, comms and event management for the prizes and provides all events and administrative back-up.
- Booker Group is the UK's leading food & drink wholesaler with branches nationwide and a delivery network. It serves over 400,000 catering customers and 100,000 independent retailers.
- The Booker Prize Archive was given on loan in 2003 to Oxford Brookes University, where it now resides.

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