

Press Release

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## The 2022 International Booker Prize shortlist announced

[International Booker Prize](#) | @TheBookerPrizes  
#2022InternationalBooker #FinestFiction

- The six shortlisted works are each translated from a different language and originate from a different country, with three continents represented on the list
  - The list is dominated by women writers
  - A Hindi title makes the shortlist for the first time
- The list includes previous winners Olga Tokarczuk and Jennifer Croft alongside authors translated into English for the first time
- Whether set in modern day Korea or mid-18<sup>th</sup> century Poland, the books share an urgent relevance

Today, 7 April, the 2022 International Booker Prize announces the six books in contention for this year's prize, which celebrates the finest fiction from around the world, translated into English. The announcement was made at The London Book Fair by chair of the judges, Frank Wynne. The contribution of author and translator is given equal recognition, with the £50,000 prize split evenly between them. In addition, for the first time in 2022, the shortlisted authors and translators will each receive £2,500, increased from £1,000 in previous years - bringing the total value of the prize to £80,000.

Wildly original works of literature that will captivate readers, this year's shortlisted books all explore trauma, whether on an individual or societal level. They include: a genre-defying collection of short stories, blurring the lines between magical realism, horror and science, and addressing the very real horrors and cruelties of patriarchy and capitalism in modern society; a tale of two versions of the same person, whose choices have led to different lives, both grappling with existential questions; an exploration of the life of a young boy subjected to relentless bullying, and his friendship with a similarly outcast female classmate; the investigations of an ailing mother into the death of her daughter, where the hidden facets of authoritarianism and hypocrisy in society are explored; a tale of an elderly woman's new lease of life following a deep depression after the death of her husband, which sees her travelling to Pakistan and confronting unresolved trauma; and the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century tale of Polish-Jewish religious leader Jacob

Frank, set in multicultural south-eastern Europe, from Lviv to Constantinople.

The 2022 shortlist is:

Title	Author	Translator	Original language	Author residence	UK Publisher or Imprint
<i>Cursed Bunny</i>	Bora Chung	Anton Hur	Korean	South Korea	Honford Star
<i>A New Name: Septology VI-VII</i>	Jon Fosse	Damion Searls	Norwegian	Norway	Fitzcarraldo Editions
<i>Heaven</i>	Mieko Kawakami	Sam Bett and David Boyd	Japanese	Japan	Pan Macmillan, Picador
<i>Elena Knows</i>	Claudia Piñeiro	Frances Riddle	Spanish	Argentina	Charco Press
<i>Tomb of Sand</i>	Geetanjali Shree	Daisy Rockwell	Hindi	India	Tilted Axis Press
<i>The Books of Jacob</i>	Olga Tokarczuk	Jennifer Croft	Polish	Poland	Fitzcarraldo Editions

The shortlist is again dominated by independent publishers. Tilted Axis and Honford Star are new to the prize.

The shortlist spans six languages: Korean, Norwegian, Japanese, Spanish, Hindi and Polish, with settings ranging across Europe and Asia, from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century to modern day.

**Frank Wynne, chair of the judges, says:**

*‘Translation is an intimate, intricate dance that crosses borders, cultures and languages. There is little to compare to the awe and exhilaration of discovering a perfect pairing of writer and translator. As a jury we have had the pleasure of reading many extraordinary books, and choosing a shortlist from among them has been difficult and sometimes heart-breaking. These six titles from six languages explore the borders and boundaries of human experience, whether haunting and surreal, poignant and tender, or exuberant and capricious. In their differences, they offer glimpses of literature from around the world, but they all share a fierce and breath-taking originality that is a testament to the endless inventiveness of fiction.’*

The shortlist was selected by the 2022 judging panel consisting of: translator, **Frank Wynne** (chair); author and academic **Merve Emre**; writer and lawyer **Petina Gappah**; writer, comedian and TV, radio and podcast presenter, **Viv Groskop**; and translator and author **Jeremy Tiang**. This is the first time a translator has chaired the panel.

This year the judges considered 135 books, with a record number of submissions received.

The 2022 International Booker Prize winner will be announced on 26 May 2022 at a ceremony at One Marylebone in London.

The shortlisted and winning authors and translators will take part in [a number of public events](#) before and after the winner announcement. These include:

### **Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall**

**22 May 2022, 14.00**

Meet the authors and translators shortlisted for the 2022 International Booker Prize in an afternoon of readings and discussion at Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall, chaired by writer and broadcaster Bidisha. More information is available on Southbank Centre's [website](#).

### **Blackwell's Manchester**

**24 May 2022, 18.30**

Join the shortlisted translators for the 2022 International Booker Prize for an evening of readings and discussion, chaired by Ellah Wakatama, Editor-at-Large at Canongate Books. Please visit Blackwell's [eventbrite page](#) for further details.

### **Hay Festival**

**29 May 2022, 17.30**

In their first interview since the announcement, join the 2022 International Booker Prize winners in conversation with Viv Groskop. More information is available on Hay Festival's [website](#).

[Thebookerprizes.com](https://www.thebookerprizes.com), the home of The Booker Prizes past and present, was relaunched in 2021. It has a full history of the prize including previous winners, shortlisted authors and judges. It is a hub for year-round editorial content designed to engage readers with both prizes and to foster a lifelong love of reading.

- Ends -

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Please find images for authors, translators and book jackets [here](#).

## Notes to Editors

- The International Booker Prize is awarded annually for the best single work of fiction translated into English and published in the UK. It was known until 2019 as the Man Booker International Prize when sponsored by Man Group. The £50,000 prize is divided equally between the author and the translator. From 2022, each shortlisted author and translator receives £2,500. The announcement of the 2021 winner, *At Night All Blood Is Black*, written by David Diop and translated by Anna Moschovakis, was met with both public and critical acclaim. The book's publisher, Pushkin Press, ordered a five-figure reprint the day after the winner announcement. The week following the winner announcement, sales of *At Night All Blood Is Black* saw a 477% sale increase on the week before. President Barack Obama, a keen follower of both of The Booker Prizes, listed *At Night All Blood Is Black* at the top of his summer reading list.
- 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 2021 winner was Damon Galgut with *The Promise*. The morning after the announcement, the book was number one on Amazon's bestseller chart. Two weeks after the win, Chatto & Windus announced that it had reprinted 153,000 copies of *The Promise*, having sold 23,878 copies in hardback, 14,622 of which sold in the two weeks following the news, a 1,925% jump in volume compared with the two weeks before.
- The 2022 Booker Prize judging panel is chaired by cultural historian, writer and broadcaster Neil MacGregor, and consists of: academic and broadcaster Shahidha Bari; historian Helen Castor; novelist and critic M John Harrison; and novelist, poet and professor Alain Mabanckou.
- 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; Tony Damer (treasurer) - member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants; Nick Barley - director, Edinburgh International Book Festival; Carol Lake - President of the JPMorgan Chase Foundation; 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 - chief marketing officer, BBC Studios; The Rt Hon. Lord David Willetts - writer, ex-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; 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; Sharmaine Lovegrove - publisher, Dialogue Books; Emma Paterson - agent, Aitken Alexander Associates; Fiammetta Rocco - senior editor and culture correspondent, *The Economist* 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.
- The Director of the Booker Prize Foundation is Gaby Wood. The Administrator of The International Booker Prize is Fiammetta Rocco - senior editor and culture correspondent, *The Economist*.
- 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 Foundation has a longstanding partnership with RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People). The Foundation funds the production of The Booker Prize for Fiction shortlisted titles in braille, giant print and audio, which the RNIB produces by the date the winner is announced. It also funds the production of the winner of the International Booker Prize in these formats. The accessible versions are then made available to the tens of thousands of blind and partially sighted members of the RNIB Library. People with sight loss have a limited choice of books in accessible formats and often have to wait much longer than their sighted peers for titles to be made available to them - and there are many more books that they will never have the chance to read. The Foundation is working with RNIB to change this story. For further information contact the RNIB PR Team on 020 7391 2223 or [pressoffice@rnib.org.uk](mailto:pressoffice@rnib.org.uk)
- The Booker Prize Foundation has partnered with the National Literacy Trust since 2012 to deliver Books Unlocked. The Foundation funds the programme, which has transformed the lives of prisoners and young offenders in the UK by helping them develop a love of reading. Prisoners are able to engage with high-quality writing as copies of The Booker Prize for Fiction and International Booker Prize shortlisted titles are sent out to prison reading groups. These same titles are also serialised as audiobooks on National Prison Radio, which is broadcast into c.80,000 cells, enabling still more prisoners to experience these exceptional stories. Authors go into prisons to discuss their writing directly with reading groups and many also record interviews on National Prison Radio. The shared vision for Books Unlocked is

to bring about positive change in prisoners' life chances. Since 1993, the National Literacy Trust has led the campaign to transform the future of the UK's most disadvantaged young people by improving their literacy levels:

[literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/books-unlocked/](https://literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/books-unlocked/)

- The Booker Prize Archive was given on loan in 2003 to Oxford Brookes University, where it now resides.

## **2022 International Booker Prize shortlist: Book synopses and biographies**

### ***Cursed Bunny***

**By Bora Chung**

**Translated by Anton Hur from Korean**

**Published by Honford Star**

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/books/cursed-bunny>

#### **Publisher's synopsis:**

*Cursed Bunny* is a genre-defying collection of short stories by the Korean author Bora Chung. Blurring the lines between magical realism, horror and science fiction, Chung uses elements of the fantastic and surreal to address the very real horrors and cruelties of patriarchy and capitalism in modern society. Anton Hur's translation skilfully captures the way Chung's prose effortlessly glides from being terrifying to wryly humorous. Winner of a PEN/Haim Grant.

#### **The judges said:**

'While the stories in *Cursed Bunny* by Bora Chung blend elements of horror, fantasy and the surreal, each is viscerally rooted in the real fears and pressures of everyday life. Chung's richly imaginative collection is translated with verve and evident relish by Anton Hur, who shifts effortlessly from playful to harrowing.'

#### **About the author:**

Bora Chung was born in Seoul in 1976. She has written three novels and three collections of short stories. She has an MA in Russian and East European area studies from Yale University and a PhD in Slavic literature from Indiana University. She currently teaches Russian language and literature and science fiction studies at Yonsei University and translates modern literary works from Russian and Polish into Korean.

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/bora-chung>

#### **About the translator:**

Anton Hur was born in Stockholm, Sweden in 1981. He has translated Man Asia Literary Prize-winner Kyung-Sook Shin's *The Court Dancer* and *Violets*, International Booker Prize-longlisted Hwang Sok-yong's *The Prisoner*, and others. He won a PEN/Heim grant for his translation of Bora Chung's *Cursed Bunny*. He lives in Seoul.

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/anton-hur>

### ***A New Name: Septology VI-VII***

**By Jon Fosse**

**Translated by Damion Searls from Norwegian**

**Published by Fitzcarraldo Editions**

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/books/a-new-name-septology-vi-vii>

#### **Publisher's synopsis:**

Asle is an ageing painter and widower who lives alone on the southwest coast of Norway. His only friends are his neighbour, Åsleik, a traditional fisherman-farmer, and Beyer, a gallerist who lives in the city. There, in Bjørgvin, lives another Asle, also a painter but lonely and consumed by alcohol. Asle and Asle are doppelgängers - two versions of the same person, two versions of the same life, both grappling with existential questions.

In this final instalment of Jon Fosse's *Septology*, the major prose work by 'the Beckett of the twenty-first century' (*Le Monde*), Christmas is approaching. Tradition has it that Åsleik and Asle eat lutefisk together, but this year Asle has agreed for the first time to celebrate Christmas with Åsleik and his sister, Guro. On Christmas Eve, Åsleik, Asle, and the dog Bragi take Åsleik's boat out on the Sygnefjord. Meanwhile, we follow the lives of the two Asles as younger adults in flashbacks: the narrator meets his lifelong love, Ales; joins the Catholic Church; starts exhibiting with Beyer; and can make a living by trying to paint away all the pictures stuck in his mind. After a while, Asle and Ales leave the city and move to the house in Dylgja. The other Asle gets married too, but his wedding ends with a sobbing bride and is followed soon after by a painful breakup.

Written in melodious 'slow prose', *A New Name: Septology VI-VII* is a transcendent exploration of the human condition by Jon Fosse, and a radically other reading experience - incantatory, hypnotic, and utterly unique.

#### **The judges said:**

'*A New Name*, the final movement in Jon Fosse's monumental *Septology*, draws together art, death, and the idea of God with a vast, gentle grace. Damion Searls' translation unfurls Fosse's slow sentence with immense precision and beauty.'

#### **About the author:**

Jon Fosse was born in 1959 on the west coast of Norway and has written over 30 books and 28 plays that have been translated into over 40 languages. His first novel, *Red, Black*, was published in 1983, and was followed by such works as *Melancholia I & II*, *Aliss at the Fire*, and *Morning and Evening*. He is one of the world's most produced living playwrights. In 2007, Fosse became a chevalier of the Ordre national du Mérite of France, and he was awarded the International Ibsen Award in 2010. In 2011, he moved into Grotten, an honorary residence for artists on the grounds of the Royal Palace in Oslo. He was awarded the European Prize for Literature in 2014 and the Nordic Council Literature Prize in 2015. *The Other Name: Septology I-II* was longlisted for the International Booker Prize in 2020. Fosse currently has homes in Bergen, Oslo, and in Hainburg, Austria.

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/jon-fosse>

**About the translator:**

Damion Searls was born in New York City in 1971 and lives in Minneapolis. He is a translator from German, French, Norwegian and Dutch, and a writer in English. He was longlisted for the 2020 International Booker Prize with Jon Fosse, for *The Other Name: Septology I-II*; he has received Guggenheim, Cullman Center, and two NEA fellowships, and the Schlegel-Tieck Translation Prize for Hans Keilson's *Comedy in a Minor Key*, the PEN Center USA Translation Award for Jon Fosse's *Aliss at the Fire*, and the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize for Uwe Johnson's four-volume *Anniversaries*, among other awards. He has also edited a one-volume abridgement of Henry David Thoreau's Journal; his own books include *What We Were Doing* and *Where We Were Going* (stories), *The Inkblots* (a history of the Rorschach Test and biography of its creator, Hermann Rorschach, which has been translated into 10 languages), and *The Philosophy of Translation*.

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/damion-searls>

**Heaven**

By Mieko Kawakami

Translated by Samuel Bett and David Boyd from Japanese

Published by Pan Macmillan, Picador

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/books/heaven>

**Publisher's synopsis:**

Told through the eyes of a 14-year-old boy subjected to relentless bullying, this is a haunting novel of the threat of violence that can stalk our teenage years.

Instead of putting up resistance, the boy suffers in complete resignation. His sole ally is a girl classmate similarly outcast and similarly preyed upon by the bullies of the school. They meet in secret in the hopes of avoiding any further attention and take solace in each other's company, completely unaware that their relationship has not gone unnoticed by their tormentors . . .

*Heaven*, Mieko Kawakami's deceptively simple yet profound work, stands as a testament to her remarkable literary talent. Here she asks us to question the fate of the meek in a society that favours the strong, and the lengths that even children will go in their learned cruelty.

**The judges said:**

'An intense, claustrophobic novel, *Heaven* uses its tale of middle-school bullying to enact Nietzsche's critique of morality. The power of Sam Bett and David Boyd's translation lies in its ability to communicate both Mieko Kawakami's abstract, philosophical ideas and her harrowing human drama.'



**About the author:**

Mieko Kawakami was born in Osaka in 1976. She is the author of the internationally bestselling novel, *Breasts and Eggs*, a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year and one of *TIME*'s Best 10 Books of 2020. Born in Osaka, Kawakami made her literary debut as a poet in 2006, and published her first novella, *My Ego, My Teeth, and the World*, in 2007. Her writing is known for its poetic qualities and its insights into the female body, ethical questions, and the dilemmas of modern society. Her works have been translated into many languages and are available all over the world. She has received numerous prestigious literary awards in Japan for her work, including the Akutagawa Prize, the Tanizaki Prize, and the Murasaki Shikibu Prize. She lives in Tokyo, Japan.

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/mieko-kawakami>

**About the translators:**

Sam Bett is a writer and Japanese translator. Awarded Grand Prize in the 2016 JLPP International Translation Competition, he won the 2019/2020 Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission Prize for his translation of *Star* by Yukio Mishima (New Directions, 2019). Sam has translated fiction by Yoko Ogawa, NISIOISIN and Keigo Higashino as well as essays by Banana Yoshimoto, Haruomi Hosono and Toshiyuki Horie. He is a founder and host of Us&Them, a quarterly Brooklyn-based reading series showcasing the work of writers who translate. With David Boyd, he is co-translating the novels of Mieko Kawakami for Europa Editions. He lives in Portland, Maine.

For further information, please visit: <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/samuel-bett>

David Boyd is Assistant Professor of Japanese at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He has translated novels and stories by Hiroko Oyamada, Masatsugu Ono and Toh EnJoe, among others. His translation of Hideo Furukawa's *Slow Boat* (Pushkin Press, 2017) won the 2017/2018 Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission (JUSFC) Prize for the Translation of Japanese Literature. With Sam Bett, he is co-translating the novels of Mieko Kawakami for Europa Editions.

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/david-boyd>

***Elena Knows***

By Claudia Piñeiro

Translated by Frances Riddle from Spanish

Published by Charco Press

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/books/elena-knows>

**Publisher's synopsis:**

From the ‘Hitchcock of the River Plate’ (*Corriere della Sera*) comes *Elena Knows*, a unique story that interweaves crime fiction with intimate tales of morality and search for individual freedom.

After Rita is found dead in the bell tower of the church she used to attend, the official investigation into the incident is quickly closed. Her sickly mother is the only person still determined to find the culprit. Chronicling a difficult journey across the suburbs of the city, an old debt and a revealing conversation, *Elena Knows* unravels the secrets of its characters and the hidden facets of authoritarianism and hypocrisy in our society.

**The judges said:**

‘*Elena Knows*, Claudia Piñeiro’s short and deeply felt novel, evokes the loneliness of ageing and the uncertainty of memory. Frances Riddle’s brutal yet sparing translation suggests the shadows and light of noir without ever eclipsing the very human tragedy at the core of the book.’

**About the author:**

As an author and scriptwriter for television, Claudia Piñeiro (Argentina, 1960) has already won numerous national and international prizes, among them the renowned German LiBeraturpreis for *Elena Knows* and the prestigious Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Prize for *Las grietas de Jara* (A crack in the wall). She is best known for her crime novels which are bestsellers in Argentina, the rest of Latin American and around the world. Many of her novels have been adapted for the big screen. Claudia Piñeiro is the third most translated Argentinean author, after Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortázar. More recently, Piñeiro has become a very active figure in the fight for the legalisation of abortion in Argentina and for the legal recognition of writers as workers. Her fiction (as with *Elena sabe*) is stemmed in the detective novel but has recently turned increasingly political. She’s been called ‘the Hitchcock of the River Plate’.

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/claudia-pineiro>

**About the translator:**

Frances Riddle was born in Raleigh, North Carolina and lives in Buenos Aires, where she works as a translator, writer, and editor. She holds an MA in translation studies from the University of Buenos Aires and a BA in Spanish literature. Her book-length publications include *A Simple Story* by Leila Guerriero (New Directions, 2017); *Bodies of Summer* by Martín Felipe Castagnet (Dalkey Archive Press, 2017); and *The Life and Deaths of Ethel Jurado* (Hisfabooks, 2017). This is her fourth title for Charco Press after *Slum Virgin* by Gabriela Cabezón Cámara (2017), *The German Room* by Carla Maliandi (2018) and *Theatre of War* by Andrea Jeftanovic (2020).

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/frances-riddle>

***Tomb of Sand***

**By Geetanjali Shree**

**Translated by Daisy Rockwell from Hindi**

**Published by Titled Axis Press**

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/books/tomb-of-sand>

**Publisher's synopsis:**

In northern India, an 80-year-old woman slips into a deep depression at the death of her husband, then resurfaces to gain a new lease on life. Her determination to fly in the face of convention -including striking up a friendship with a hijra person - confuses her bohemian daughter, who is used to thinking of herself as the more 'modern' of the two.

To her family's consternation, Ma insists on travelling to Pakistan, simultaneously confronting the unresolved trauma of her teenage experiences of Partition, and re-evaluating what it means to be a mother, a daughter, a woman, a feminist.

Rather than respond to tragedy with seriousness, Geetanjali Shree's playful tone and exuberant wordplay results in a book that is engaging, funny, and utterly original, at the same time as being an urgent and timely protest against the destructive impact of borders and boundaries, whether between religions, countries, or genders.

**The judges said:**

'The constantly shifting perspectives and timeframes of Geetanjali Shree's inventive, energetic *Tomb of Sand* lead us into every cranny of an 80-year-old woman's life and surprising past. Daisy Rockwell's spirited translation rises admirably to the complexity of the text, which is full of word play and verve. A loud and irresistible novel.'

**About the author:**

Author of three novels and several story collections, Geetanjali Shree's work has been translated into English, French, German, Serbian, and Korean. She was born in Mainpuri, India, in 1957. This is the first of her books to be published in the UK. She has received and been shortlisted for a number of awards and fellowships, and lives in New Delhi.

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/geetanjali-shree>

**About the translator:**

Daisy Rockwell is a painter, writer and translator living in Vermont, US. She was born in 1969 in Massachusetts. She has translated a number of classic works of Hindi and Urdu literature, including Upendranath Ashk's *Falling Walls*, Bisham Sahni's *Tamas*, and Khadija Mastur's *The Women's Courtyard*. Her 2019 translation of Krishna Sobti's *A Gujarat Here, a Gujarat There* was awarded the Modern Language Association's Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Translation Prize.

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/daisy-rockwell>

***The Books of Jacob***

By Olga Tokarczuk

Translated by Jennifer Croft from Polish

Published by Fitzcarraldo Editions

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/books/the-books-of-jacob>

**Publisher's synopsis:**

In the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, as new ideas begin to sweep the continent, a young Jew of mysterious origins arrives in a village in Poland. Before long, he has changed not only his name but his persona; visited by what seem to be ecstatic experiences, Jacob Frank casts a charismatic spell that attracts an increasingly fervent following. In the decade to come, Frank will traverse the Hapsburg and Ottoman empires, throngs of disciples in his thrall as he reinvents himself again and again, converts to Islam and then Catholicism, is pilloried as a heretic and revered as the Messiah, and wreaks havoc on the conventional order, Jewish and Christian alike, with scandalous rumours of his sect's secret rituals and the spread of his increasingly iconoclastic beliefs. In *The Books of Jacob*, her masterpiece, 2018 Nobel Prize in Literature laureate Olga Tokarczuk writes the story of Frank through the perspectives of his contemporaries, capturing Enlightenment Europe on the cusp of precipitous change, searching for certainty and longing for transcendence.

**The judges said:**

'Olga Tokarczuk's *The Books of Jacob* weaves an epic tapestry from the bizarre, mundane, and utterly unpredictable sweep of history as it is created moment by moment, crammed with a staggering cast of characters, places and historical events. Jennifer Croft's lithe, elegant translation nimbly conveys the novel's delicate irony and its ethereal beauty.'

**About the author:**

Olga Tokarczuk is the author of nine novels, three short story collections and has been translated into 30 languages. Her novel *Flights* won the 2018 International Booker Prize, in Jennifer Croft's translation. In 2019, she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. She was born in Sulechów, Poland in 1962 and lives in Wrocław.

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/olga-tokarczuk>

**About the translator:**

Jennifer Croft is the recipient of Fulbright, PEN, and National Endowment for the Arts grants, as well as the Michael Henry Heim Prize, and her translations from Polish, Spanish, and Ukrainian have appeared in the *New York Times*, *n+1*, *Electric Literature*, *The New Republic*, *BOMB*, *Guernica*, and elsewhere. She holds a Ph.D. from Northwestern University and an M.F.A. from the University of Iowa. She is a founding editor of *The Buenos Aires Review*. In 2018 she won the International Booker Prize for her translation of *Flights* by Olga Tokarczuk. She was born in Stillwater, Oklahoma in 1981 and lives in Los Angeles.

For further information, please visit <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/jennifer-croft>