



CINNAMON PRESS

## 2019 Cinnamon Literature Prize Adjudication Report

Dear Writers,

Competitions are strange things. Often many of the entries will share a few themes, perhaps something to do with the zeitgeist, and often a competition will have an overall character. In some, despite a sizeable pool of good or even excellent writing, there are one or two manuscripts that stand out, and that every adjudicator picks independently. At other times, the final decision is hard and we wish we were a bigger press with several publishing slots on offer.

The 2019 Cinnamon Literature Prize fits the latter. The quality of writing in the long list made it almost impossible to draw up a short list and from there we had an extremely tough time eliminating any of the finalists.

This was a big field and it was wonderful to see the range of voices and serious commitment to writing. Many of the manuscripts that didn't quite make it to the long list were from writers we hope to see future work from, people whose work might have made it further in a less competitive field.

So huge congratulations to everyone who did make it to the long list – it was hard won.

Sarah Barr  
Valerie Bence  
Sylvia Bluck  
David Calcutt  
Jody Cooksley  
Jenny Cozens  
David Cundall  
Ashleigh Davies  
Shanta Everington  
Patrick Finegan  
Jane Harrigan  
Jacqueline Haskell  
Lauren Hayhurst  
Eva Hibbs  
Sandra Hogarth-Scott  
Siân Hughes  
Rob McInroy  
Wendy Jean MacLean  
Rosemary Mairs  
Gwenda Major  
Stephanie Norgate  
David Olsen  
Brigita Orel  
Helen Overall

Jonathan Page  
Wedy Riley  
Penny Shutt  
Sally Spedding  
Seán Street  
Marion Tracy  
Mark Wagstaff  
Marjory Woodfield  
Patricia Helen Wooldridge  
Django Wylie

The short listed entrants submitted work that sang off the page and/or showed immense promise. Getting this far in such a strong competition was no mean feat.

David Calcutt  
Shanta Everington  
Jacqueline Haskell  
Siân Hughes  
Stephanie Norgate  
Seán Street  
Mark Wagstaff  
Patricia Helen Wooldridge

In the end, despite going round several circles and wondering if we could just squeeze in one ... or maybe two ... more books, we knew we had to decide and we also know that taking on too many titles does none of them any service. Moreover, there was one manuscript that, despite how much we loved all of those on the short list, we kept returning to.

So we're delighted to announce that the winner is Siân Hughes with her poetry collection *Sunshine & Nothing Else*. What we loved about this collection was the pitch perfect voice. 'Sunshine' is a long narrative poem and the persona is vivid, the reader is taken into the events in deceptively simple, direct language that simmers with emotion that is never pointed out or dressed up. 'Nothing else' is a sequence that is poignant, heart breaking, affectionate and full of the laugh out loud absurdities of coping with extreme situations, in this case losing a mother. The ability to render real life in a way that at first looks artless, but with a power that keeps calling the reader back is the mark of great writer. It takes huge control to hone and then trust the reader with communication that is always so much more than it first appears. Every word is doing work and that's why we kept going back. And when we did there were so many nuances to keep us reading, not only in what is being said but in what is not said; there is never too much information in these poems, but what we get is full of impact, even down to how the sound of the words resonate to add affect.

Thank you to everyone who entered and congratulations to all those who were listed, especially to the short list and to Siân Hughes, who we're delighted to be welcoming to Cinnamon Press.

Jan Fortune & Adam Craig