

Press release

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The Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction announces 2025 longlist

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- “*Variety is the common theme of this longlist,*” says 2025 chair of judges, Robbie Millen, with “all human life being found in the pages of these 12 remarkable books.”
- This year’s longlist offers fresh insight into the lives, creative processes and legacy of the titans of art and culture, including an exploration of the iconic **Lennon-McCartney** relationship as well as biographies of **Muriel Spark** and **Alfred, Lord Tennyson**.
- Other subjects include a range of twentieth century historical narratives that continue to define our geopolitical landscape and identities, from the long, tortuous relationship between Britain and the post war federal Europe, entered, life in Budapest before during and after The Second World War, the impact of China’s one-child policy, and the development of modern Afghanistan.
- Three authors previously recognised by the prize feature on the 2025 longlist: 2010 winner **Barbara Demick**, twice shortlisted **Richard Holmes** and twice longlisted **Frances Wilson**.
- Other recognised authors on this year's longlist include Pulitzer Prize finalist **Yiyun Li**, recipient of the Australian Society of Authors Medal **Helen Garner**, Orwell Prize shortlisted **Adam LeBor**, Royal Society of Literature’s Ondaatje Prize winner **Justin Marozzi** and *The Sunday Times* Young Writer of the Year recipient **Adam Weymouth**.

- They are joined by two former foreign correspondents – **Jason Burke** and **Lyse Doucet** – as well as acclaimed writer **Ian Leslie** and *The New Statesman's* editor-in-chief **Tom McTague**.
- Hutchinson Heinemann, Cornerstone has two titles on the longlist, alongside books from Allen Lane and The Bodley Head, Vintage, bringing PRH's total to four. Books published by William Collins and Fourth Estate (HarperCollins), and Apollo and Bloomsbury Circus (Bloomsbury Publishing), Faber (Faber & Faber), Granta Publications and Weidenfeld & Nicolson (Orion), and Picador (Pan Macmillan) complete the list.
- Shortlist to be announced on **Thursday 2 October**, with the prize winner announced on **Tuesday 4 November**.
- Imagery can be downloaded [here](#)

The longlist for the Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction, which celebrates the best in non-fiction writing, is announced today, Thursday 4 September.

The prize recognises and rewards the best of non-fiction and is open to authors of any nationality. It covers all non-fiction in the areas of current affairs, history, politics, science, sport, travel, biography, autobiography and the arts. The winning author will receive £50,000, with the other shortlisted authors (to be announced Thursday 2 October) receiving £5,000, bringing the total prize value to £75,000.

The longlist of 12 books were chosen by this year's judging panel: **Robbie Millen**, literary editor of *The Times* and *The Sunday Times* (chair); historian and author, **Pratinav Anil**; journalist and broadcaster, **Inaya Folarin Iman**; cultural historian, biographer and novelist, and previous winner of the prize, **Lucy Hughes-Hallett**; deputy culture editor of *The Economist*, **Rachel Lloyd**; and author and biographer, **Peter Parker**.

Their selection was made from over 350 books published between 1 November 2024 and 31 October 2025.

The titles on this year's longlist are:

Author / translator (Nationality)	Title (Imprint)
Jason Burke (British)	<i>The Revolutionists: The Story of the Extremists Who Hijacked the 1970s</i> (The Bodley Head, Vintage, Penguin Random House)
Barbara Demick (American)	<i>Daughters of the Bamboo Grove: China's Stolen Children and a Story of Separated Twins</i> (Granta Publications)
Lyse Doucet (Canadian)	<i>The Finest Hotel in Kabul: A People's History of Afghanistan</i> (Hutchinson Heinemann, Cornerstone, Penguin Random House)
Helen Garner (Australian)	<i>How to End a Story: Collected Diaries</i> (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, The Orion Publishing Group)
Richard Holmes (British)	<i>The Boundless Deep: Young Tennyson, Science and the Crisis of Belief</i> (William Collins, HarperCollins Publishers)
Adam LeBor (British)	<i>The Last Days of Budapest: Spies, Nazis, Rescuers and Resistance, 1940-1945</i> (Apollo, Bloomsbury Publishing)
Ian Leslie (British)	<i>John & Paul: A Love Story in Songs</i> (Faber & Faber)
Yiyun Li (Chinese-born American)	<i>Things in Nature Merely Grow</i> (Fourth Estate, HarperCollins Publishers)
Justin Marozzi (British)	<i>Captives and Companions: A History of Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Islamic World</i> (Allen Lane, Penguin Books UK)
Tom McTague (British)	<i>Between the Waves: The Hidden History of a Very British Revolution 1945-2016</i> (Picador, Pan Macmillan)
Adam Weymouth (British)	<i>Lone Wolf: Walking the Faultlines of Europe</i> (Hutchinson Heinemann, Cornerstone, Penguin Random House)
Frances Wilson (British)	<i>Electric Spark: The Enigma of Muriel Spark</i> (Bloomsbury Circus, Bloomsbury Publishing)

Robbie Millen, chair of judges, says:

"Variety. That's the common theme of this longlist. All the judges were impressed, delighted and relieved by the mind-quickenning variety of the books that we read in terms of style, character and subject matter. It's been a terrific reading experience."

We've been given an insight into the original, offbeat mind of great novelists, seen how poets responded to the faith-quaking challenge of science, and through the experiences of one hotel seen a country in a new light. We've followed a writer into the abyss of personal tragedy and soared to the heights of creativity with pop's greatest bromance. Now we also know how far a wolf will lope to find a mate - and, shudder, how eunuchs are made. All human life can be found in the pages of these 12 remarkable books."

The authors on this year's longlist revisit historical narratives and disclose personal dramas, that examine a range of topics across global politics, warfare, motherhood and autobiography.

There are personal, international stories including a sweeping and captivating history of modern Afghanistan from one of the world's leading war correspondents, **Lyse Doucet**. In ***The Finest Hotel in Kabul: A People's History of Afghanistan*** Doucet weaves together the experiences of the Afghans who have kept the Hotel Inter-Continental running since it first opened in 1969, to craft a vivid and personal history of their country. In ***Daughters of the Bamboo Grove***, a masterful and exhaustively researched book, Baillie Gifford Prize winner **Barbara Demick** humanises China's one-child policy and charts her own role in reuniting a pair of separated twins in China and the USA, against huge odds. The deeply personal and devastating ***Things in Nature*** **Merely Grow**, a defiant work of radical acceptance by Pulitzer Prize finalist **Yiyun Li**, written after the loss by suicide of her two teenage sons, was also recognised by the judges

Europe is the focus in both ***Between the Waves: The Hidden History of a Very British Revolution 1945-2016*** by political writer **Tom McTague** and ***Lone Wolf: Walking the Faultlines of Europe*** by **Adam Weymouth**. In *Between the Waves*, McTague chronicles the post Second World War battle of ideas and personalities that first took the United Kingdom into the Common Market in 1973, to leaving the European Union in a referendum over forty years later. Weymouth's *Lone Wolf* throws a unique light on Europe's mountainous hinterlands at a moment of political and environmental change, by documenting an epic walk across the Alps in the footsteps of a young wolf from Slovenia to the north of Verona.

Shining a line on little known histories is **Adam LeBor** with ***The Last Day of Budapest: Spies, Nazis, Rescuers and Resistance***, the story of Budapest in the period immediately before and after The Second World War. Extracting information from diaries, archival material and interviews with some of the last survivors of the war, Adam LeBor brilliantly recreates life in this wartime city. A remarkable collection of historical human tragedy is recounted In ***Captives and Companions: A History of Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Islamic World***, an extraordinary synthesis of contemporary reportage. Historian **Justin Marozzi** traces the variety of enslavement in the Islamic world, taking the reader on an astonishing journey and unfurling a riveting human drama in one of history's most overlooked stories. Another sweeping and extensively researched historical narrative is ***The Revolutionists: The Story of the Extremists Who***

Hijacked the 1970s by **Jason Burke**. Drawing on decades of research, recently declassified government files, and original interviews with spies, witnesses and victims, Jason Burke takes us into the lives and minds of the perpetrators of the deadly operations in the West in the 1970s.

The longlist also includes two literary biographies, with an exhilarating, landmark insight into Muriel Spark by **Frances Wilson, *Electric Spark: The Enigma of Muriel Spark***. Wilson, who has twice been longlisted for the Baillie Gifford Prize, follows the clues, riddles, and instructions Spark planted for posterity in her biographies, fiction, autobiography and archives, and aims to crack her code. ***The Boundless Deep: Young Tennyson, Science and the Crisis of Belief***, a dazzling new biography by **Richard Holmes**, who has also been twice shortlisted for the Baillie Gifford Prize, focuses on the younger life of a man haunted by the great intellectual and scientific issues of his time, about biological evolution, the notion of a godless, un pitying universe, and of planetary extinction, which were as terrifying to Tennyson as climate catastrophe is to us today.

In addition, on this year's longlist are the collected diaries of one of Australia's greatest writers, ***How to End a Story: Collected Diaries* by Helen Garner** and a biography charting the love and jealousy between the two geniuses behind ***The Beatles, John & Paul: A Love Story in Songs* by Ian Leslie**. *How to End a Story* are the inimitable diary entries that show Garner like never before and reveal the inner life of a woman in love, a mother, a friend and a formidable writer at work. In *John & Paul: A Love Story* Ian Leslie draws on recently released footage and recordings of The Beatles and traces the twists and turns of the relationship between John Lennon & Paul McCartney through the music they collaborated and produced together and enables us to see and hear the iconic group anew.

Longlisted books - judges' comments

***The Revolutionists: The Story of the Extremists Who Hijacked the 1970s*, Jason Burke**

"The Revolutionists makes a counter intuitive argument – tracing the decline of the left that led to the rise of Islamism – and is tremendously well-written. It is the work of a lifetime, drawing on 12 languages for its services and is the kind of book this year's judges would like to champion."

***Daughters of the Bamboo Grove*, Barbara Demick**

"Daughters of Bamboo Grove is a fascinating book, which humanises the one-child policy that came to define so much of the world's understanding of China in a particular period. Through compelling storytelling, she exposes the lives fragmented and families torn apart by its implementation and the complexities and lasting trauma of this far-reaching policy."

***The Finest Hotel in Kabul: A People's History of Afghanistan*, Lyse Doucet**

"Through the prism of one hotel, the Hotel Inter-Continental Kabul, this is a deeply humane story of Afghanistan. Lyse Doucet brings the country's political, social and

economic changes vividly to life by focusing on the ordinary people who work there, revealing the impact of decades of upheaval on everyday lives."

How to End a Story: Collected Diaries, Helen Garner

"Garner's candid, pacey diary chronicles the end of her second marriage and the challenges of being a writer. There is a skilled narrative drive which presents a lot of personal material that keeps you hooked, not necessarily on what is happening in terms of the story, but about Garner's whole life and about what's going on outside her window."

The Boundless Deep: Young Tennyson, Science and the Crisis of Belief, Richard Holmes

"Richard Holmes is a master biographer and this thrilling book, which focuses on the poet's early years and his immersion in scientific thought, has the effect of reintroducing us to Tennyson. It situates his poetry within the much wider intellectual context of his time, exploring existential questions and the terrifying implications of scientific discovery on our understanding of the human condition."

The Last Day of Budapest: Spies, Nazis, Rescuers and Resistance, Adam LeBor

"Set in The Second World War and the period immediately before and afterwards Adam LeBor's book skilfully brings to life a large cast of vivid characters. It tells us so much about what happens when you have a city, a culture destroyed by warfare, and the pretty awful things that come up through the cracks in the pavement."

John & Paul: A Love Story in Songs, Ian Leslie

"John and Paul by Ian Leslie tells a story that we think we all know, of the Beatles, but it takes a set of songs, and using those songs looks at this central relationship of the band, and it weaves together musical analysis, biography and social history. It's deeply entertaining and enjoyable."

Things in Nature Merely Grow, Yiyun Li

"Yiyun Li's memoir, written after the loss of two teenage sons, is unlike any other book on the list. She writes beautifully - precise, thoughtful and thought provoking. It's an extraordinary, powerful, candid and intellectually confident book."

Captives and Companions, Justin Marozzi

"Captives and Companions by Justin Marozzi, a book on slavery in the Muslim world, is tremendously well written. It's very mannered, it's thoroughly investigated, and it's all put together very well."

Between The Waves: The Hidden History of a Very British Revolution 1945-2016, Tom McTague

"A gripping exploration of Euroscepticism in Britain, McTague's book stands out for its balanced, multifaceted approach to a politically charged subject. Often challenging the myths and narratives on both sides of the argument, it reveals various characters in history that have unexpectedly come to shape such a huge, part of contemporary political discussion in the UK."

Lone Wolf: Walking the Faultlines of Europe, Adam Weymouth

“Lone Wolf by Adam Weymouth is terrific - it takes a journey of a single wolf from Slovenia, tracking its journey across the Alps all the way down into Italy. We learn a lot about how we see wolves in popular culture, and it discusses big issues like conservation and rewilding. There's a great cast of characters – it's a beautiful book that covers so much.”

Electric Spark: The Enigma of Muriel Spark, Frances Wilson

“Wilson’s biography of Muriel Spark is a dazzling exploration of the novelist’s mind and character. Wilson does a very good job of inhabiting Spark, revealing new light on her use of codes and word play for example. It’s completely fascinating and like all good, literary biographies, it makes you want to go back and reread her entire works.”

The shortlist and winner announcements

The announcement of the six books shortlisted for this year’s prize will take place on Thursday 2 October. An event celebrating the shortlist will take place at the Cheltenham Literature Festival on 14 October.

The winner will be announced on Tuesday 4 November at an award ceremony at BMA House, generously supported by the Blavatnik Family Foundation. The announcement will also be livestreamed across the Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction social channels.

Last year’s winner was Richard Flanagan for *Question 7*.

The Baillie Gifford Prize Read Smart podcast, generously supported by the Blavatnik Family Foundation, is available on iTunes, Spotify, SoundCloud and Entale.

To sign up for the Baillie Gifford Prize newsletter, please visit <http://thebailliegiffordprize.co.uk/newsletter>

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For information about the prize visit: www.thebailliegiffordprize.co.uk
or follow us on X @BGPrize #BGPrize2025

Further information from Four Agency:
Emma Finnigan & Barry O’Reilly – bgprizepress@four.agency – 07870 210 468

About the longlist (from the publishers)

The Revolutionists: The Story of the Extremists Who Hijacked the 1970s

Jason Burke

Published by The Bodley Head, Vintage, Penguin Random House

Publicist: Jessica Spivey / jspivey@penguinrandomhouse.co.uk

In the 1970s, a network of radical extremists terrorised the West with intricately planned plane hijackings and hostage-takings. Drawing on decades of research, recently declassified government files, secret documents, and original interviews with hijackers, spies, witnesses and victims, Jason Burke takes us into the lives and minds of the perpetrators of these often-deadly operations.

Set against the backdrop of the Cold War and packed with revelations about iconic events such as the deadly attack on the Munich Olympic, Israel's raid on Entebbe, the Iranian revolution and the rise of Islamic extremism, this is a sweeping, scrupulously reported historical narrative with the pace and suspense of a thriller.

Jason Burke, the International Security correspondent for the *Guardian*, has been a foreign correspondent for almost 30 years, reporting from the Middle East, South Asia, Europe and Africa. Burke is the author of acclaimed books on terrorism: the Orwell Prize-shortlisted *The New Threat from Islamic Militancy*, alongside *The 9/11 Wars*, *Al-Qaeda: The True Story of Radical Islam* and *On the Road to Kandahar: Travels through Conflict in the Islamic World*.

Daughters of the Bamboo Grove: China's Stolen Children and a Story of Separated Twins

Barbara Demick

Published by Granta Publications

Publicist: Lamorna Elmer / lmer@granta.com

In 2000, a Chinese woman gave birth to twins in a bamboo grove, trying to avoid detection by the government because she already had two daughters. Two years later, an American couple travelled to Shaoyang to adopt a Chinese toddler they thought had been abandoned.

What they didn't know – and what award-winning journalist Barbara Demick uncovered in 2007, while working as a correspondent in Beijing – was that their daughter had been snatched from her beloved family and her identical twin.

Daughters of the Bamboo Grove tells the gripping story of separated twins, their respective fates in China and the USA, and Barbara Demick's role in reuniting them against huge odds. Painting a rich portrait of China's history and culture, it asks questions about the roots, impact and consequences of China's one-child policy, the ethics of international adoption, and, ultimately, the assumptions and narratives we hold about the quality of lives lived in the East and the West.

Barbara Demick won the Baillie Gifford Prize in 2010 for *Nothing to Envy*, which also won a Winner of Winners Award in 2023 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Baillie Gifford Prize. Barbara was also longlisted for the Baillie Gifford Prize in 2020 for *Eat the Buddha* and is also the author of *Besieged* which won the George Polk Award, the Robert F Kennedy Award and was shortlisted for a Pulitzer Prize.

The Finest Hotel in Kabul: A People's History of Afghanistan

Lyse Doucet

Published by Hutchinson Heinemann, Cornerstone, Penguin Random House

Publicist: Najma Finlay / NFinlay@penguinrandomhouse.co.uk

In 1969, the luxury Hotel Inter-Continental Kabul opened its doors, reflecting Afghanistan's hopes of becoming a modern country, connected to the world. Lyse Doucet first checked into the Inter-Continental in 1988 - in the decades since, she has witnessed a Soviet evacuation, a devastating civil war, the US invasion, and the rise, fall and rise of the Taliban, all from within its increasingly battered walls. The Inter-Con has never closed its doors.

Now, she weaves together the experiences of the Afghans who have kept the hotel running to craft a richly immersive history of their country. It is the story of Hazrat, the septuagenarian housekeeper who still holds fast to his Inter-Continental training from the hotel's 1970s glory days. Of Abida, who became the first female chef after the fall of the Taliban in 2001. And of Malalai and Sadeq, the twenty-somethings who seized every opportunity offered by two decades of fragile democracy – only to see the Taliban come roaring back in 2021. Through these intimate portraits of Kabul life, the story of a hotel becomes the story of a people.

Lyse Doucet is the BBC's award-winning Chief International Correspondent and a senior presenter for BBC World News television and BBC World Service Radio. Before joining the BBC's team of presenters in 1999, Lyse spent fifteen years as a BBC foreign correspondent with postings in Kabul, Jerusalem, Amman, Tehran, Islamabad and Abidjan. In 2022, she contributed an introduction to *My Pen Is the Wing of a Bird: New Fiction by Afghan Women*, the stories in which were developed by UNTOLD, a writer development programme for marginalised writers in areas of conflict and post-conflict. The collection was a *Financial Times* Fiction in Translation Book of the Year in 2022.

How to End a Story: Collected Diaries

Helen Garner

Published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, The Orion Publishing Group

Publicist: Virginia Woolstencroft / virginia.woolstencroft@orionbooks.co.uk

Helen Garner has kept a diary for most of her adult life. Recognised as one of the great Australian writers, but of all her books, it is her diaries that she likes best. Collected for the first time into one volume, these inimitable diaries show Garner like never before: as a fledging author in bohemian Melbourne, publishing her lightning-rod debut novel

while raising a young daughter in the 1970s; in the throes of an all-consuming love affair in the 1980s; and clinging to a disintegrating marriage in the 1990s.

How to End a Story reveals the inner life of a woman in love, a mother, a friend and a formidable writer at work. Told with devastating honesty, steel-sharp wit and an ecstatic attention to the details of everyday life, it offers all the satisfactions of a novel alongside the enthralling intimacy of something written in private and just for pleasure.

Helen Garner's work has been recognised for her body of work as the winner of the 2006 inaugural Melbourne Prize for Literature, the 2016 Windham-Campbell Literature Prize, the 2019 Australia Council Award for Lifetime Achievement in Literature and the 2023 Australian Society of Authors Medal. Her books include *This House of Grief*, *Monkey Grip* and *The Children's Bach*.

The Boundless Deep: Young Tennyson, Science and the Crisis of Belief

Richard Holmes

Published by William Collins, HarperCollins Publishers

Publicist: Lizzie Rowles / lizzie.rowles@harpercollins.co.uk

Alfred, Lord Tennyson rose to eminence as rapid revolutionary discoveries were being made in the fields of biology, astronomy, geology, and marine science. For the first time, people were pursuing answers to questions that had felt previously unknowable on biological evolution, the notion of a godless, unpitiful universe, and of planetary extinction. These were as terrifying to Tennyson as climate catastrophe is to us today.

In Holmes' extraordinary biography of a younger Tennyson, we witness him wrestling with mind-altering ideas about geology and deep time, the vastness, beauty, and terror of the new cosmology, and the challenges of social revolution. Tennyson's wild imagination and deep engagement with these concepts helped him emerge as the poetic voice of his generation.

Richard Holmes is a two-time shortlisted author for the Baillie Gifford Prize - for *Coleridge: Darker Reflections* in 1999, as well as *The Age of Wonder* in 2009. These books earned Holmes several prizes, including the Duff Cooper Prize for *Coleridge: Darker Reflections*, and the Royal Society Prize for Science Books and the National Book Critics Circle Award for *The Age of Wonder*. His other biographies include *Shelley: The Pursuit* (winner of the 1974 Somerset Maugham Prize), *Coleridge: Early Visions* (winner of the 1989 Whitbread Book of the Year Award), and *Dr. Johnson & Mr. Savage* (winner of the 1993 James Tait Black Prize).

The Last Days of Budapest: Spies, Nazis, Rescuers and Resistance, 1940-1945

Adam LeBor

Published by Apollo, Bloomsbury Publishing

Publicist: Kate Wands / kate.wands@headofzeus.com

Budapest, autumn 1943. Four years into the war, Hungary is allied with Nazi Germany and the Hungarian capital is the Casablanca of central Europe. The city swirls with intrigue and betrayal, home to spies and agents of every kind. But Budapest remains at peace, an oasis in the midst of war where Allied POWs, and Polish and Jewish refugees find sanctuary. The riverside cafes are crowded and the city's famed cultural life still thrives. All that comes to an end in March 1944 when the Nazis invade.

Extracting information from diaries, archival material and interviews with some of the last survivors of the war, Adam LeBor brilliantly recreates life and death in this wartime city, the catastrophic fate of half of its Jewish population and the destruction of the siege. Told through the eyes of a multitude of vivid, gripping characters, including glamorous aristocrats, spies, smugglers and SS Officers, this is the story of how Budapest slowly dies as the war destroys the city.

Adam LeBor is the author of nine non-fiction books, including *Hitler's Secret Bankers* which was shortlisted for the Orwell Prize, and *City of Oranges* which was shortlisted for the Jewish Quarterly Wingate Prize.

John & Paul: A Love Story in Songs

Ian Leslie

Published by Faber & Faber

Publicist: Hannah Turner / hannah.turner@faber.co.uk

Lennon and McCartney were more than friends, rivals or collaborators. They were intimates who both had the fabric of their world ruptured at a young age, and who longed to make emotional connections; with each other, and with audiences.

Ian Leslie traces the twists and turns of their relationship through the music it produced and offers rich insights into the nature of creativity, collaboration and human connection. Drawing on recently released footage and recordings, this is a startlingly fresh take on two of the greatest icons in music history. Leslie's majestic and wildly enjoyable biography will make us see and hear Lennon and McCartney anew.

Ian Leslie is the author of acclaimed books on human psychology: *Born Liars*, *Curious* and *How to Disagree*. He has written for, among others, the *New Statesman*, *Economist*, *New York Times* and *Financial Times*. Ian is the author of *The Ruffian*, an influential Substack newsletter and podcast. He has been a Beatles fan since he was seven.

Things in Nature Merely Grow

Yiyun Li

Published by Fourth Estate Ltd, HarperCollins Publishers

Publicist: Michelle Kane / michelle.kane@harpercollins.co.uk

'There is no good way to state these facts, which must be acknowledged. My husband and I had two children and lost them both: Vincent in 2017, at sixteen, James in 2024, at nineteen. Both chose suicide, and both died not far from home.'

There is no good way to say this – because words fall short. It takes only an instant for death to become fact, 'a single point in a timeline'. Living now on this single point, Li turns to thinking and reasoning and searching for words that might hold a place for James. Li does what she can: including not just writing but gardening, reading Camus and Wittgenstein, learning the piano, and living thoughtfully alongside death. This is a book for James, but it is not a book about grieving. *Things in Nature Merely Grow* is a testament to Li's indomitable spirit.

Yiyun Li is the author of several works of fiction. She is the recipient of many awards, including a *Guardian* First Book Award, PEN/Faulkner Award, a PEN/Malamud Award, a PEN/Hemingway Award, a PEN/Jean Stein Book Award, a MacArthur Fellowship, and a Windham-Campbell Prize, and she was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. Her work has appeared in *The New Yorker* and *The Best American Short Stories*, among other publications. She teaches at Princeton University and lives in Princeton, New Jersey.

Captives and Companions: A History of Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Islamic World

Justin Marozzi

Published by Allen Lane, Penguin Books

Publicist: Annabel Huxley / AHuxley@penguinrandomhouse.co.uk

Slavery in the Islamic world has a long, complex and controversial history. *Captives and Companions: A History of Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Islamic World* is a brilliant synthesis of history and contemporary reportage, which brings to life the voices of the enslaved in stories of eighth-century concubines and ninth-century revolts, thirteenth-century slave soldiers who established dynastic rule over Egypt, Syria and Iraq, eighteenth-century corsairs and twentieth century pearl divers in the Gulf. It includes first-hand accounts of this legacy in the twenty-first century, including the depredations of Daesh and continuing hereditary slavery in Mali and Mauritania.

Justin Marozzi traces the extraordinary variety of enslavement in the Islamic world, which ranged from agricultural labour and domestic toil to elite concubinage, guardianship of sacred spaces, political leadership and even military command. Taking the reader on an extraordinary historical journey from Baghdad to Bamako, Tripoli to

Timbuktu, Istanbul to the Black Sea, this is the riveting human drama of those caught up in one of history's most remarkable overlooked stories.

Justin Marozzi is a historian and journalist who has spent most of his professional life living and working in the Muslim world. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and former Trustee of the Royal Geographical Society, he is a senior advisor to the Middle East Association. He is the author of several previous books – his last, *Baghdad: City of Peace, City of Blood* won the Royal Society of Literature's Ondaatje Prize.

Between the Waves: The Hidden History of a Very British Revolution 1945-2016

Tom McTague

Published by Picador, Pan Macmillan

Publicist: Emma Bravo / emma.bravo@macmillan.com

In a story of vaulting ambition and underhand politics, of nation, identity and belief, acclaimed political writer Tom McTague chronicles the battle of ideas, events and personalities that first took the country into the Common Market in 1973, only to take it out of the European Union in an explosive referendum a little over forty years later.

Drawing on unpublished sources and exclusive interviews, McTague unearths the roots of ideological conflict that raged between the leading politicians of the twentieth century as they fought for the future of Europe.

A riveting story of the clashing ideals that have pulled at Britain's public imagination for more than seven decades, *Between the Waves* raises that most elemental of questions: who are we?

Tom McTague is the Editor-in-Chief of *The New Statesman*. He has previously held positions as Political Editor at *UnHerd* and *The Independent on Sunday*, staff writer at *The Atlantic* and Chief UK Correspondent at *POLITICO*. He has been highly commended at the British Press Awards and co-anchored the geopolitical history podcast *These Times*. He is co-author of *Betting the House*, named by *The Times* as a 2017 Political Book of the Year. *Between the Waves* is his first work of history.

Lone Wolf: Walking the Faultlines of Europe

Adam Weymouth

Published by Hutchinson Heinemann, Cornerstone, Penguin Random House

Publicist: Alice Dewing / ADewing@penguinrandomhouse.co.uk

In 2011, a young wolf named Slavc set out from Slovenia, arriving four months later on the Lessinian plateau, north of Verona. There had been no wolves in northern Italy for a century, but here he crossed paths with a female wolf on a walkabout of her own. A decade later and there are more than a hundred wolves back in the area, the result of their remarkable meeting.

In *Lone Wolf*, Weymouth walks Slavc's path, examining the changes facing these wild corners of Europe. The result is a multifaceted account of a region caught in a moment of kaleidoscopic flux, from an award-winning writer with a uniquely perceptive eye for detail.

Adam Weymouth's work has been published widely, including in *Granta*, *The Atlantic*, *The Observer* and the BBC. His first book, *Kings of the Yukon*, tells the story of his 2000-mile canoe trip across Alaska. It won the *Sunday Times* Young Writer of the Year, the Lonely Planet/Stanfords Adventure Travel Book of the Year and the Prix Paul-Emile Victor. He has been named by the National Writing Centre as one of ten writers shaping the UK's future.

Electric Spark: The Enigma of Muriel Spark

Frances Wilson

Published by Bloomsbury Circus, Bloomsbury Publishing

Publicist: Jonny Coward / jonny.coward@bloomsbury.com

The word most commonly used to describe Muriel Spark is 'puzzling'. Spark was a puzzle, and so too are her books. She dealt in word games, tricks, and ciphers; her life was composed of weird accidents, strange coincidences and spooky events. Evelyn Waugh thought she was a saint, Bernard Levin said she was a witch, and she described herself as 'Muriel the Marvel with her X-ray eyes'. Following the clues, riddles, and instructions Spark planted for posterity in her biographies, fiction, autobiography and archives, Frances Wilson aims to crack her code.

Electric Spark explores not the celebrated Dame Muriel but the apprentice mage discovering her powers. We return to her early years when everything was piled on: divorce, madness, murder, espionage, poverty, skulduggery, blackmail, love affairs, revenge, and a major religious conversion. If this sounds like a novel by Muriel Spark it is because the experiences of the 1940s and 1950s became, alchemically reduced, the material of her art.

Frances Wilson is a critic, journalist and the author of six works of non-fiction, including *The Sinking of J. Bruce Ismay*, which won the Elizabeth Longford Prize for Historical Biography; *Guilty Thing: A Life of Thomas de Quincey*, which was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize and was longlisted for the Baillie Gifford Prize; and *Burning Man: The Ascent of D.H. Lawrence*, which won the Plutarch Award, was shortlisted for the Duff Cooper Prize and the James Tait Black Award and was longlisted for the Baillie Gifford Prize.

Notes to Editors

About Baillie Gifford, The Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction and The Blavatnik Family Foundation:

- **Baillie Gifford** is an independent investment partnership founded over a century ago in Edinburgh, owned and run by 58 partners who all work at the firm. The firm's mission is to find game-changing companies (both public and private) that can sustain growth and provide returns for clients over five to ten years and sometimes longer. With around 1,700 staff and assets under management of £217bn, it has offices in Edinburgh, Amsterdam, Dublin, Frankfurt, Hong Kong, London, New York, Shanghai, Singapore, Toronto, and Zurich (at 31 December 2024). Baillie Gifford aims to have long-term relationships and has sponsored the Samuel Johnson Prize Ltd (the Baillie Gifford Prize) since 2016.
- Known from 1999 to 2015 as the Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction, **The Baillie Gifford Prize for Non-Fiction** is the UK's premier annual prize for non-fiction books. The prize rewards excellence in non-fiction writing, bringing the best in intelligent reflection on the world to new readers. It covers all non-fiction in the areas of current affairs, history, politics, science, sport, travel, biography, autobiography and the arts. We celebrate the best in contemporary non-fiction writing as we believe all the best stories are true.
- Books published in English by writers of any nationality are eligible for the 2025 prize, provided they were published in the UK between 1 November 2024 and 31 October 2025. Last year's winner was Richard Flanagan's *Question 7*.
- It is owned by The Samuel Johnson Prize Ltd, a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. It is governed by a Board of Directors and administered by Four Agency. The Board comprises Sir Peter Bazalgette (Chair of Creative Industries Council and RCA, Member of Soft Power Council), Chair; Toby Mundy (Prize Director); Ailah Ahmed (Publishing Director, Penguin Random House); Caroline Daniel (Partner at Brunswick); Morgan Entekin (Founder, Grove/Atlantic Inc) (observer); Peter Florence CBE (Director of The Conversation and chair of the European Festivals Forest); Dotti Irving (Founding Director); Rosamund McCarthy (Partner, Stone King); Shreya Ramroop (Director, Siena Accounting); Peter Straus CBE; Frederick Studemann (Literary Editor, *Financial Times*) (observer); and Sandra Taylor (Head of PR, Penguin Random House).
- The prize was first awarded in 1999 and is now worth £50,000 to the winning author. For any translated work recognised by the judges, 75% of the available prize money will be awarded to the author and 25% will be awarded to the translator(s).

- The prize operates entirely independently of its sponsors. Every year, a group of six distinguished judges, newly appointed for each award and representing a range of expertise and a plurality of views, meet to review, champion and celebrate the finest in literary non-fiction published in the preceding 12 months, from more than 300 titles in contention. The judges are entirely free to consider any book of their choosing, whether it is formally submitted by publishers or not.
- Previous winners are: *Stalingrad* by Antony Beevor (1999), *Berlioz: Servitude and Greatness* by David Cairns (2000), *The Third Reich: A New History* by Michael Burleigh (2001), *Peacemakers: The Paris Peace Conference of 1919* by Margaret Macmillan (2002), *Pushkin: A biography* by T.J. Binyon (2003), *Stasiland* by Anna Funder (2004), *Like a Fiery Elephant* by Jonathan Coe (2005), *1599: A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare* by James Shapiro (2006), *Imperial Life in the Emerald City* by Rajiv Chandrasekaran (2007), *The Suspicions of Mr Whicher* by Kate Summerscale (2008), *Leviathan or The Whale* by Philip Hoare (2009), *Nothing to Envy: Real Lives in North Korea* by Barbara Demick (2010), *Mao's Great Famine* by Frank Dikötter (2011), *Into the Silence: The Great War, Mallory and the conquest of Everest* by Wade Davis (2012), *The Pike*, by Lucy Hughes-Hallett (2013), *H is for Hawk* by Helen Macdonald (2014), *Neurotribes: The Legacy of Autism and How to Think Smarter About People Who Think Differently* by Steve Silberman (2015), *East West Street* (2016) by Philippe Sands, *How to Survive A Plague* by David France (2017) *Chernobyl: History of a Tragedy* by Serhii Plokhyy (2018), *The Five* by Hallie Rubenhold (2019), *One Two Three Four: The Beatles in Time* by Craig Brown (2020), *Empire of Pain* by Patrick Radden Keefe (2021), *Super Infinite: The Transformations of John Donne* by Katherine Rundell (2022), *Fire Weather: A True Story from a Hotter World* by John Vaillant (2023), and *Question 7* by Richard Flanagan (2024).
- A report by Nielsen examined the sales through the UK TCM of winners between 2016 and 2022. It highlighted an average gain in unit sales of 857% in the four weeks after winning the prize, compared to sales the month before. *Super-Infinite*, by Katherine Rundell, the winner of the Baillie Gifford Prize 2022 went to No. 1 on the *Sunday Times* bestseller list in paperback. In that same week there were two other shortlisted books from that year in the Top 10. *The Five* by Hallie Rubenhold, the winner of the Baillie Gifford Prize in 2019, was a *Sunday Times* bestseller in the first week of paperback publication, was voted Hay Festival 'Book of the Year' by readers, as well as being shortlisted for a host of other awards. For more information, the full *Publishing Perspectives* analysis is available [here](#).
- **The Blavatnik Family Foundation** supports world-renowned educational, scientific, cultural, and charitable institutions in the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel, and across the globe. Led by Sir Leonard Blavatnik, founder of Access Industries, the Foundation promotes innovation, discovery, and creativity to benefit the whole of society. Over the past decade, the Foundation has

donated more than \$1 billion to over 250 organizations. See more at www.blavatnikfoundation.org