

Maggie Sawkins Wins Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry for *Zones of Avoidance*



Zones of Avoidance – Maggie Sawkins

Judges Eileen Cooper, Denise Riley and Sean Borodale have presented the Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry to **Maggie Sawkins** for *Zones of Avoidance*.

The Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry is awarded annually to recognise excellence and innovation in poetry. It is one of the only awards to acknowledge the wide range of work being produced by poets – not just in books, but beyond. This year the prize celebrates its fifth year doing just that.

Zones of Avoidance is a multimedia live literature production written and performed by **Maggie Sawkins** and directed by Mark C Hewitt. Sawkins describes it as 'A Word Dance into the Void of Addiction'. The narrator's quest is to discover the lure of psychoactive substances following her daughter's descent into addiction. This multi-media live literature production captures the surreal mundanity of living with addiction and combines the poet's moving testimony with the voices of addicts in recovery. *Zones of Avoidance* was first performed as part of Portsmouth Bookfest in October 2013.

Judge Denise Riley said of the winning piece:

"This is an ambitious multimedia presentation using film, voices and sound, which works exceptionally well. It is a challenging, painfully open account of a daughter's addiction, yet it's an account which also offers graceful good humour. Beautifully written and uncompromising, it's a modern story that we felt the writer was compelled to tell; it acts as a vivid witness of harsh experiences which aren't often described in poetry, and Maggie Sawkins' illuminating descriptions will prove helpful for others to hear."

The £5,000 prize is gifted by **Carol Ann Duffy**, funded from the annual honorarium the Poet Laureate traditionally receives from HM The Queen. Maggie Sawkins was presented with her prize by Carol Ann Duffy at an award ceremony at the Savile Club, London, on Friday 28 March 2014, alongside the winner of the National Poetry Competition.

The judges considered work in a wide variety of forms for the award – from radio-plays and installations to books and sound works – including a number of interdisciplinary collaborations. They selected a shortlist of five, including Maggie Sawkins: Steve Ely, Chris McCabe, Hannah Silva and Zoë Skoulding.

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Maggie Sawkins

Maggie Sawkins has written poetry since she was a child. Her two poetry collections are *Charcot's Pet* (Flarestack, 2003) and *The Zig Zag Woman* (Two Ravens Press, 2007). Maggie works with people in recovery from addiction, and teaches students with specific learning difficulties at South Downs College, near Portsmouth. In 2003 she founded Tongues&Grooves Poetry and Music Club. Last year she represented Portsmouth on the T.S. Eliot Poetry Prize 20th Anniversary Tour.

– ENDS –

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Notes to Editors:

TED HUGHES AWARD JUDGES:



Sean Borodale

Sean Borodale was Northern Arts Fellow of the Wordsworth Trust in 1999 and Guest Artist at the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam in 2002. From 2002-7 he was a teaching fellow at the Slade School of Fine Art, UCL. His long topographical work *Notes for an Atlas* was recommended by Robert Macfarlane in the *Guardian* Summer Books 2005. It was performed in 2007 at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, directed by Mark Rylance, as part of the first London Festival of Literature. Recent projects include *Grey Matter* with artist Jonathan Houlding which included a residency at the Fundacion Pilar i Joan Miro, Mallorca, 2009. *Bee Journal*, his debut full-length collection of poems was published by Jonathan Cape in 2012. He was selected as a Granta New Poet in 2012 and was recently shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize and the Costa Book Award.

Eileen Cooper
Photo: Anne Purkiss

Painter and printmaker **Eileen Cooper** RA studied at Goldsmith's College and Royal College of Art, London. She was appointed Keeper of the Royal Academy Schools in 2011, the first female officer of the RA since it was founded in 1768. She has had solo exhibitions at Air Gallery, Benjamin Rhodes Gallery and the Dulwich Picture Gallery (all London); Castlefield Gallery, Manchester; Artsite, Bath; and Glasgow Print Studio. *Eileen Cooper at 50* was shown at Art First in London and New York. Her work has featured in many group and international touring exhibitions including: *The New British Painting*; *The Outsider: British Figuration Now*; *Picturing People* and *Innocence and Experience*. She has been represented by Art First since 1997

Denise Riley
Photo: Kevin Lake

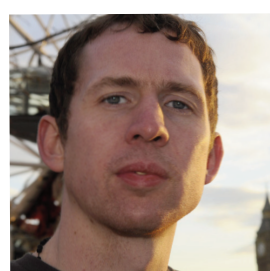
Denise Riley has a background in both poetry and academia. She is currently Professor of Poetry and the History of Ideas at the University of East Anglia. Riley's many collections of poetry include *Penguin Modern Poets 10* (with Douglas Oliver and Ian Sinclair), and *Denise Riley: Selected Poems*. She edited *Poets on Writing: Britain 1970-1991*. Her recent work studies philosophies of self-presence, the neurophenomenology of self-awareness, and the history of understandings of inner speech and how these enter into our ideas of what's interior and what's outside. Her long poem sequence 'A Part Song' won the Forward Prize for Best Single Poem, and was shortlisted for the Ted Hughes Award (both 2012).

TED HUGHES AWARD SHORTLIST:



Steve Ely

Steve Ely is a poet, novelist and biographer from Yorkshire. *Oswald's Book of Hours* is his first published book of poetry. His second, *England*, will be published by Smokestack next year. His novel *Ratmen* is published by Blackheath Books. He's just completed *Made in Mexborough: Ted Hughes's South Yorkshire*, a biographical work about the late Laureate's neglected Mexborough period. He's currently writing poetry about football, genocide and the mediaeval hermit Richard Rolle.



Chris McCabe

Chris McCabe's collections are *The Hutton Inquiry*, *Zeppelins* and *THE RESTRUCTURE* and he has recorded a CD with the Poetry Archive. His plays *Shad Thames*, *Broken Wharf* and *Mudflats* have been performed in London and Liverpool. His prose book about the dead poets of West Norwood Cemetery, *In the Catacombs*, and his next poetry collection will both be published by Penned in the Margins in 2014. He works as the Poetry Librarian at The Saison Poetry Library and teaches for The Poetry School.



Hannah Silva

Hannah Silva is a Birmingham based poet and playwright. She has performed internationally and throughout the UK at festivals including Latitude and StAnza. Her work for theatre includes a solo show *Opposition*, a play for a large cast of teenage girls *Orchid* and *The Disappearance of Sadie Jones*. Her radioplay *Marathon Tales* (co-written with Colin Teevan for BBC Radio 3) won the Tinniswood Award. Her debut poetry collection *Forms of Protest* is published by Penned in the Margins.

Notes to Editors continues over

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Zoë Skoulding is a poet, translator, editor and critic. She has published four collections of poetry, most recently *The Museum of Disappearing Sounds* (Seren, 2013) and *Remains of a Future City* (Seren, 2008), poems from which have been widely translated. She has performed her work at many international festivals, often incorporating electronic sound in her readings as well as collaborating with musicians. She is Senior Lecturer in the School of English at Bangor University.

Zoë Skoulding

• **The Poetry Society** was founded in 1909 to promote a “more general recognition and appreciation of poetry”. Since then, it has grown into one of Britain’s most dynamic arts organisations, representing British poetry both nationally and internationally. We publish leading poetry magazine *The Poetry Review*; and with innovative education and commissioning programmes and a packed calendar of performances, readings and competitions, the Poetry Society champions poetry for all ages. In addition to the Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry, the Poetry Society runs the National Poetry Competition, one of the world’s longest-running and most prestigious prizes for an individual poem. The Poetry Society also organises the Hamish Canham Prize, The Geoffrey Dearmer Prize, The Anne Born Prize, The Popescu Prize for Poetry in Translation, the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award for poets aged 11-17, and the young people’s performance poetry championship SLAMBassadors UK.

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• **Recommendations for the Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry:** Members of the Poetry Society and Poetry Book Society were invited to recommend a living UK poet, working in any form, who they felt had made the most exciting contribution to poetry in 2013. The judges selected their shortlist from the recommendations received.

PREVIOUS WINNERS OF THE TED HUGHES AWARD FOR NEW WORK IN POETRY

- 2012 **Kate Tempest** for her spoken word story *Brand New Ancients* (produced in partnership with Battersea Arts Centre)
- 2011 **Lavinia Greenlaw** for her sound work *Audio Obscura* (produced with Artangel and Manchester International Festival)
- 2010 **Kaite O’Reilly** for her verse translation of Aeschylus’ *The Persians* (National Theatre Wales production).
- 2009 **Alice Oswald** for her book *Weeds and Wild Flowers* (Faber & Faber) with accompanying etchings by Jessica Greenman.



• **The logo for the Ted Hughes Award** was designed by David Carroll of David Carroll & Co (www.davidcarrollandco.com) and uses the iconic image of *Crow* by Leonard Baskin. The image was used originally on the cover of *Crow: From the Life and Songs of the Crow* by Ted Hughes (Faber & Faber, 1970) and is reproduced by kind permission of Lisa Baskin and the Estate of Leonard Baskin, © Estate of Leonard Baskin.

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