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CELEBRATING THE POWER OF LITERATURE TO PROMOTE PEACE,

DAYTON LITERARY PEACE PRIZE ANNOUNCES 2008 FINALISTS

***Finalists include Junot Diaz, Edwidge Danticat, Eboo Patel, and Cullen Murphy;
Winners to be honored at gala Dayton ceremony on September 28th***

Dayton, OH (August 11, 2008) – Celebrating the power of literature to promote peace and non-violent conflict resolution, the Dayton Literary Peace Prize Committee today announced the ten finalists for the 2008 Dayton Literary Peace Prize.

The Dayton Literary Peace Prize is the only international literary peace prize awarded in the United States. It was founded in 2006 as an outgrowth of the Dayton Peace Prize, which commemorates the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords ending the war in Bosnia. Each year, it recognizes a Lifetime Achievement recipient and adult fiction and nonfiction authors whose works promotes the cause of peace.

Written by first-time authors (*Acts of Faith* by Eboo Patel) and Pulitzer Prize-winning novelists (*The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz), the 2008 finalists explore a diverse range of topics ranging from the aftermath of war (*The Ocean in the Closet* by Yuko Taniguchi) to the dangers of empire (*Are We Rome?* by Cullen Murphy). Reflecting the Dayton Literary Peace Prize's mission to promote global understanding, the nominated books are also set in locations around the world – from Haiti (*Brother I am Dying* by Edwidge Danticat) to West Africa (*Song for Night* by Chris Abani) to the South Pacific's coral reefs (*Fragile Earth* by Julia Whitty). The full list of finalists can be found below and at: <http://daytonliterarypeaceprize.org/2008-finalists.htm>.

"Each of this year's finalists inspire readers to rethink how the pressing issues facing our planet can best be resolved," said Sharon Rab, chair of the Dayton Literary Peace Prize. "In these increasingly uncertain and violent times, they remind us that the pen truly is mightier than the sword, and that lasting peace can be achieved through dialogue and knowledge."

The committee previously announced that Civil Rights and Martin Luther King, Jr. historian Taylor Branch (*Parting the Waters, At Canaan's Edge, Pillar of Fire*) will be the recipient of the 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award, a distinction he shares with Studs Terkel (2006) and Elie Wiesel (2007).

2007 winners were Brad Kessler's *Birds In Fall* (Fiction Winner) and Mark Kurlansky's *Nonviolence: Twenty-five Lessons From the History of a Dangerous Idea* (Nonfiction Winner).

A winner and runner-up in fiction and nonfiction will be announced in early September. Winners receive a \$10,000 honorarium and runner-ups receive \$1,000.00. They will be honored at a gala ceremony hosted by award-winning journalist Nick Clooney in Dayton on Sunday, September 28th. Branch and the winners will also participate in a public reading in Dayton on September, 27th.

The 2008 Dayton Literary Peace Prize fiction finalists are:

- *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* by Junot Diaz (Penguin Group): Mixing pop culture and political criticism, this critically acclaimed novel is an astonishing vision of the contemporary American immigrant experience and the endless human capacity to persevere.
- *Coal Black Horse* by Robert Olmstead (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill): Set during the Civil War, *Coal Black Horse* is a brutally honest novel depicting a boy's search for his father and the horrors of war.
- *Lost City Radio* by Daniel Alarcon (HarperCollins Publishers): Taking place in a nameless South American country, this powerful story illustrates war's devastating impact on a society transformed by violence.
- *The Ocean in the Closet* by Yuko Taniguchi (Coffee House Press): A touching novel portraying a young woman's journey as she helps her family heal and recover from the damages of both the Vietnam War and World War II.
- *Song for Night* by Chris Abani (Akashic Books): Trained as a human mine detector, a West African boy soldier witnesses and takes part in unspeakable brutality.

The 2008 nonfiction finalists are:

- *Acts of Faith* by Eboo Patel (Beacon Press): An American Muslim from India recounts the journey that led him to embrace religious pluralism and reject hatred.
- *Are We Rome?* by Cullen Murphy (Houghton Mifflin Company): Comparing the politics and culture of Ancient Rome with that of the contemporary United States, Murphy reveals lessons on how America can avoid Rome's demise.
- *Break Through* by Michael Shellenberger and Ted Nordhaus (Houghton Mifflin Company): The two young environmentalists behind the controversial 2004 essay, "The Death of Environmentalism," articulate a new politics for solving the world's ecological crisis.
- *Brother, I am Dying* by Edwidge Danticat (Knopf Publishing Group): A moving memoir of Danticat's Haitian immigrant family's struggle to stay connected in spite of living apart.
- *Fragile Edge* by Julia Whitty (Houghton Mifflin Company): *Fragile Edge* takes readers on an underwater journey to explore the threats facing coral reefs and why they are vital to human survival.

To be eligible for the 2008 awards, English-language books must be published or translated into English in 2007 and address the theme of peace on a variety of levels, such as between individuals, among families and communities, or among nations, religions, or ethnic groups.

Finalists will be reviewed by a panel of prominent writers including Gerald Early, Amy Hempel, Jane McCafferty and Katherine Vaz.

About the Dayton Literary Peace Prize

The Dayton Literary Peace Prize honors writers whose work uses the power of literature to foster peace, social justice, and global understanding. Launched in 2006, it has already established itself as one of the world's most prestigious literary honors, and is the only literary peace prize awarded in the United States. As an offshoot of the Dayton Peace Prize, the Dayton Literary Peace Prize awards a \$10,000 cash prize each year to one fiction

and one nonfiction author whose work advances peace as a solution to conflict, and leads readers to a better understanding of other cultures, peoples, religions, and political points of view. An annual lifetime achievement award is also bestowed upon a writer whose body of work reflects the Prize's mission; previous honorees included Studs Terkel and Elie Wiesel.

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