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RECOGNIZING THE POWER OF LITERATURE TO PROMOTE PEACE AND RECONCILIATION,

DAYTON LITERARY PEACE PRIZE ANNOUNCES 2017 FINALISTS IN FICTION & NONFICTION

Shortlist includes *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead, *Hillbilly Elegy* by J.D. Vance, *Barkskins* by Annie Proulx, *The Song Poet* by Kao Kalia Yang; *Winners to be honored at gala ceremony on November 5th*

Dayton, OH (September 7, 2017) – Recognizing the power of literature to promote peace and reconciliation, the Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation today announced the finalists for the 2017 Dayton Literary Peace Prize in fiction and nonfiction.

Inspired by the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords that ended the war in Bosnia, The Dayton Literary Peace Prize is the only international literary peace prize awarded in the United States. The Prize celebrates the power of literature to promote peace, justice, and global understanding. This year's winners will be honored at a gala ceremony in Dayton on November 5th.

Organizers announced in July that Irish novelist, journalist, and essayist Colm Tóibín, whose fiction and nonfiction captures the impact of exile and political conflict on individual lives, will receive the 2017 [Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award](#), named in honor of the noted U.S. diplomat who helped negotiate the Dayton Peace Accords.

The full list of finalists can be found below and at www.daytonliterarypeaceprize.org.

"At a time of great uncertainty in the world, this year's finalists reveal how we got to this point and offer powerful lessons on how we can heal, reconcile, and build a better world," said Sharon Rab, co-chair of the Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation. "Now more than ever, we need to celebrate authors who dare to explore the impact of war, exile, racism, and economic inequality and, more importantly, endeavor to offer hope in these tumultuous times."

The 2017 Dayton Literary Peace Prize fiction finalists are:

- **[Barkskins](#) by Annie Proulx (Scribner)**: Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award-winning author Annie Proulx's most ambitious and epic work ever, a dazzling feat of imagination and research ten years in the writing—a violent, bloody, magnificently dramatic novel about the forming of the new world over 200 years ago.
- **[Homegoing](#) by Yaa Gyasi (Alfred A. Knopf)**: A riveting, kaleidoscopic debut novel: a story of race, history, ancestry, love, and time that traces the descendants of two sisters torn apart in eighteenth-century Africa across three hundred years in Ghana and America.

- **[Perfume River](#) by Robert Olen Butler (*Grove Atlantic*):** In *Perfume River*, Pulitzer Prize-winning author Robert Olen Butler traces the legacy of the Vietnam War through the dramatic portrait of a single North Florida family struggling to confront the past. It is a profound and poignant book that echoes the American experience and the lives of so many affected by war.
- **[The Fortunes](#) by Peter Ho Davies (*Houghton Mifflin Harcourt*):** Sly, funny, intelligent, and artfully structured, *The Fortunes* by Peter Ho Davies recasts American history through the lives of Chinese Americans and reimagines the multigenerational novel through the fractures of immigrant family experience.
- **[The Underground Railroad](#) by Colson Whitehead (*Doubleday*):** Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, the #1 *New York Times* bestseller from Colson Whitehead is a magnificent tour de force chronicling a young slave's adventures as she makes a desperate bid for freedom in the antebellum South.
- **[The Veins of the Ocean](#) by Patricia Engel (*Grove Atlantic*):** From award-winning author Patricia Engel, *The Veins of the Ocean* follows the riveting story of one young woman's devotion to her brother on death row and the journey she takes toward a freer future. Set along the vibrant coasts of Miami, Havana, and Cartagena, this novel explores the beauty of the natural world and the solace it brings to even the most fractured lives.

The 2017 Dayton Literary Peace Prize nonfiction finalists are:

- **[City of Thorns](#) by Ben Rawlence (*Picador*):** In *City of Thorns*, Rawlence interweaves the stories of nine individuals to show what life is like in Dadaab, the world's largest refugee camp, sketching the wider political forces that keep the refugees trapped. Lucid, vivid, and illuminating, *City of Thorns* is an urgent human story with deep international repercussions, brought to life through the people who call Dadaab home.
- **[Hillbilly Elegy](#) by J.D. Vance (*Harper Collins*):** From a former marine and Yale Law School graduate, a powerful account of growing up in a poor Rust Belt town that offers a broader, probing look at the struggles of America's white working class.
- **[The Hundred-Year Walk](#) by Dawn MacKeen (*Houghton Mifflin Harcourt*):** In *The Hundred-Year Walk*, Dawn MacKeen alternates between her grandfather Stepan's courageous account of surviving the Armenian genocide of 1915, drawn from his long-lost journals, and her own story as she attempts to retrace his steps, setting out alone to Turkey and Syria, shadowing her resourceful, resilient grandfather across a landscape still rife with tension. Their shared story is a testament to family, to home, and to the power of the human spirit to transcend the barriers of religion, ethnicity, and even time itself.
- **[The Song Poet](#) by Kao Kalia Yang (*Metropolitan Books*):** Written with the exquisite beauty for which Kao Kalia Yang is renowned, *The Song Poet* recounts the life of her father Bee Yang, a Hmong refugee in Minnesota, driven from the mountains of Laos by American's Secret War. Above all, it is a love story -- of a daughter for her father, a father for his children, a people for their land, their traditions, and all that they have lost.

- ***What Have We Done* by David Wood (Little, Brown & Company)**: Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist David Wood offers a groundbreaking examination of a pervasive yet poorly-understood experience among our soldiers: moral injury, the violation of our fundamental values of right and wrong that so often occurs in the impossible moral dilemmas of modern conflict.
- ***While the City Slept* by Eli Sanders (Viking)**: A Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter's gripping account of one young man's path to murder—and a wake-up call for mental health care in America.

A winner and runner-up in fiction and nonfiction will be announced on October 3. Winners receive a \$10,000 honorarium and runners-up receive \$2,500. Finalists are reviewed by a [judging panel](#) of prominent writers including Gish Jen, Robin Hemley, Alan Taylor, and Helen Thorpe.

To be eligible for the 2017 awards, English-language books must be published or translated into English in 2016 and address the theme of peace on a variety of levels, such as between individuals, among families and communities, or between nations, religions, or ethnic groups.

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 is recognized 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. Additionally, the Richard C. Holbrooke Distinguished Achievement Award is bestowed upon a writer whose body of work reflects the Prize's mission; previous honorees include Wendell Berry, Taylor Branch, Geraldine Brooks, Louise Erdrich, Barbara Kingsolver, Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, Tim O'Brien, Marilynne Robinson, Gloria Steinem, Studs Terkel, and Elie Wiesel. For more information visit the Dayton Literary Peace Prize media center at <http://daytonliterarypeaceprize.org/press.htm>.

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