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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CROOK'S CORNER BOOK PRIZE
LONGLIST OF EXCEPTIONAL DEBUT SOUTHERN
NOVELS ANNOUNCED
(Have we found the next Carson McCullers
or Flannery O'Conner?)**

The linkages between good writing and good food and drink are clear and persistent. I can't imagine a better means of celebrating their entwining than this innovative award. — John T. Edge

CHAPEL HILL, NC – The Crook's Corner Book Prize Foundation has named 12 books to the Crook's Corner Book Prize Longlist of exceptional debut novels set in the American South. These 12 novels were selected from 68 submissions.

"It was exciting to find so many great books—several of them from independent publishers (even micro-publishers)—emerging from our reading," said Anna Hayes, founder and president of the Crook's Corner Book Prize Foundation.

"This grass-roots effort to discover and champion books in general, Southern Literature in particular, is amazing and refreshing," said Jamie Fiocco, owner of Flyleaf Books and president of the Southern Independent Booksellers Alliance. "The Crook's Corner Book Prize Longlist is a great example of what independent booksellers have been doing for years: finding top-quality reading experiences, regardless of the book's origin—small or large publisher. Readers trust the rich literary history of the South to deliver a sense of place and great characters; now this Prize lets readers learn about the cream of the crop of new storytellers. We are making a display highlighting these books as recommended reading and encourage other indy stores to do the same."

"Among the most memorable Southern debut novels that come to mind are *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* (Carson McCullers), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Harper Lee), *The Orchard Keeper* (Cormac McCarthy), *Look Homeward Angel* (Thomas Wolfe), *Wise Blood* (Flannery O'Conner),

Lie Down in Darkness (William Styron), *Invisible Man* (Ralph Ellison), *Other Voices, Other Rooms* (Truman Capote), *The Bluest Eye* (Toni Morrison),” said Shannon Ravenel, Algonquin Books co-founder and Crook’s Corner Book Prize board member. “I am loving reading, along with the committee, these first novels.”

THE CROOK’S CORNER BOOK PRIZE LONGLIST FOR EXCEPTIONAL DEBUT NOVELS SET IN THE SOUTH:

LEAVING TUSCALOOSA, Walter Bennett (Fuze Publishing)
CODE OF THE FOREST, Jon Buchan (Joggling Board Press)
A LAND MORE KIND THAN HOME, Wiley Cash (William Morrow)
GREEN GOSPEL, L.C. Fiore (Livingston Press)
BILLY LYNN’S LONG HALFTIME WALK, Ben Fountain (Ecco)
THE SILENCE OF BONAVENTURE ARROW, Rita Leganski (Harper Collins)
THE SECRETS OF MARY BOWSER, Lois Leveen (William Morrow)
THE TWELVE TRIBES OF HATTIE, Ayana Mathis (Knopf)
THE ENCHANTED LIFE OF ADAM HOPE, Rhonda Riley (Ecco)
GLOW, Jessica Maria Tuccelli (Viking/Penguin)
THE FAMILY FANG, Kevin Wilson (Harper Collins)
WASH, Margaret Wrinkle (Atlantic Monthly Press)

The Crook’s Corner Book Prize is in its first year. The concept of having a restaurant attach its name to a book prize was inspired by the famous literary cafés of Paris, which have a long tradition of conferring prestigious literary awards. Crook’s Corner Café & Bar, in Chapel Hill, NC, is a James Beard American Classic restaurant and has a rich history of supporting artists. Crook’s Corner hopes other Southern restaurants will join in its efforts and offer their own book prizes.

“This may be the age of the restaurant,” said Katharine Walton, Southern publicist and board member for the Prize. “Culinary arts seem to be trumping literary arts in terms of media coverage, so this is a way to join forces.”

Intended to encourage emerging writers in a publishing environment that seems to change daily, the Prize is equally open to self-published authors and traditionally published authors.

The Crook’s Corner Book Prize Foundation will choose four finalists from the 12 books on the Longlist. The finalists will be announced November 15, 2013.

From the four finalists, Jill McCorkle—noted author (most recently of *Life After Life*), who shortly after graduating from UNC-Chapel Hill had her first two novels published simultaneously by the newly-established Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill—will choose the first winner of the Crook’s Corner Book Prize.

The winning author will receive not only a cash prize of \$1000 but—in a nod to the Gallic inspiration for the award, following in the tradition of cafés in Paris— one free glass of wine per day whenever he or she visits Crook’s during the year of the award.

“That’s reason enough to get an apartment in Chapel Hill for year,” noted one editor at *Garden & Gun* magazine.

“The linkages between good writing and good food and drink are clear and persistent,” said John T. Edge, director of the Southern Foodways Alliance. “I can’t imagine a better means of celebrating their entwining than this innovative award. The only fault I find is with the beverage that will be tendered to the winner. Bourbon seems a better choice.”

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AND SO, ON A FUN-FOR-ALL NOTE: For authors, aspiring authors, and readers too—who like John T. Edge prefer Bourbon—mixologist Shannon Healy of Crook’s and Alley Twenty Six in Durham, NC, suggests (and has created) the Book Prize cocktail. It’s made with, perhaps, the metaphorical makings of a great novel: Larceny (Bourbon), Americano (Cocchi), yes some Bitters, and, of course, a Twist. So even if your book is not yet in the running to become the next great Southern novel, you could still belly up to the bar and say, “I’ll have a Book Prize.”

NOTE ON NEXT YEAR’S PRIZE: When the Crook’s Corner Book Prize winner is announced, January 7, 2014, the Foundation will begin accepting submissions for next year’s prize.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, visit www.crookscornerbookprize.com.
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