

FOR RELEASE NOVEMBER 2:

CROOK'S CORNER BOOK PRIZE ANNOUNCES SHORTLIST

CHAPEL HILL, NC – The Crook's Corner Book Prize Foundation has announced four finalists for the third annual Crook's Corner Book Prize, to be awarded for an exceptional debut novel set in the American South. The winner will be announced January 4, 2016 at Crook's Corner Café & Bar in Chapel Hill, NC.

The four finalists are:

JAM ON THE VINE, by LaShonda Katrice Barnett (Grove Press). The story of a black female journalist in the Jim Crow South, this is a rich family saga and work of historical fiction. Barnett, born in Kansas City, Missouri, has taught literature and history at Columbia University, Sarah Lawrence College, Hunter College, and Brown University.

THE MARAUDERS, by Tom Cooper (Crown). Set in the post-BP oil spill Gulf Coast, this is a riotous tale of outlandish characters driven by dreams generally but not always indistinguishable from greed. Cooper lives in New Orleans.

SOIL, by Jamie Kornegay (Simon & Schuster). A dark and powerful tale of an idealistic environmental scientist's descent into madness, this book is set in the Mississippi hill country and recalls the masters of Southern Gothic tragedy. Kornegay runs an independent bookstore in the Mississippi Delta.

AGAINST THE COUNTRY, by Ben Metcalf (Random House). Polemic and metafiction combine in a screed against the vaunted virtues of country living. Metcalf, the former literary editor of *Harper's Magazine*, challenges literary convention and the national myth of rural goodness versus urban evil.

Now in its third year, the Crook's Corner Book Prize has already attracted attention. The first two winners, Wiley Cash (*A LAND MORE KIND THAN HOME*) and Kim Church (*BYRD*), chosen by judges Jill McCorkle and Randall Kenan respectively, went on to garner numerous other awards and honors. Wiley Cash is now working on his third novel, and Kim Church on her second.

The 2015 Longlist was indeed a long list, consisting of 18 titles, which reflected the extraordinary quality of the submissions. "These books are by debut writers," said Anna Hayes, president of the Crook's Corner Book Prize Foundation, "but we received so many that I would never have guessed were first novels. The depth, maturity, and execution are astounding."

INSPIRATION FOR THE PRIZE: The concept of a restaurant attaching 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. For now, Crook's

Corner is the only restaurant in the United States that hosts a literary book prize, but the Prize's founders hope they may start a trend.

"This may be the age of the restaurant," said Katharine Walton, Southern publicist and board member for the Prize. "Nowadays culinary arts are rivaling literary arts in terms of media coverage, so this is a way to join forces."

TO RECAP, here's the list of the CROOK'S CORNER BOOK PRIZE'S LONGLIST of 18 top debut novels, selected from 47 submissions, announced summer 2015:

TO DO THE DEAL, by Cathy Baker (Demitasse Press)
JAM ON THE VINE, by LaShonda Katrice Barnett (Grove Press)
SLIM AND THE BEAST, by Samuél L. Barrantes (Inkshares)
RUBY, by Cynthia Bond (Hogarth)
THE MARAUDERS, by Tom Cooper (Crown)
THE LAST DAYS OF VIDEO, by Jeremy Hawkins (Soft Skull Press)
WHERE ALL LIGHT TENDS TO GO, by David Joy (G.P. Putnam's Sons)
THE LATE MATTHEW BROWN, by Paul Ketzle (Apprentice House)
SOIL, by Jamie Kornegay (Simon & Schuster)
MINNOW, by James McTeer (Hub City Press)
AGAINST THE COUNTRY, by Ben Metcalf (Random House)
THE SWEETHEART, by Angelina Mirabella (simon & Schuster)
THE QUAKER CAFÉ, by Brenda Bevan Remmes (Lake Union Publishing)
UNBECOMING, by Rebecca Scherm (Viking)
THE STORY OF LAND & SEA, by Kate Simpson Smith (Harper Collins)
MIGRATORY ANIMALS, by Mary Helen Specht (Harper Perennial)
CHARLESTON, by Margaret Bradham Thornton (Ecco)
MY SUNSHINE AWAY, by M.O. Walsh (G.P. Putnam's Sons)

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? From the four finalists, noted author Lee Smith will choose the winner of the Crook's Corner Book Prize to be announced at a gala event Monday, January 4, 2016 at Crook's Corner. The winning author will receive a cash prize of \$1000 and, in a nod to the Gallic inspiration for the award, one free glass of wine at Crook's each day of the prize year.

"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."

NOTE ON NEXT YEAR'S PRIZE: The Crook's Corner Book Prize Foundation will begin accepting submissions for next year's prize on January 1, 2016. Intended to encourage emerging writers in a publishing environment that seems to change daily, submissions are welcome from self-published as well as traditionally published authors.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, visit www.crookscornerbookprize.com.

MEDIA CONTACTS: Katharine Walton 919-357-4400 info@KatharineWaltonRepresents.com
and Cindy Hamel at Cindy Hamel PR 917-544-173 cindysellers@gmail.com

###