

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 10, 2019

CROOK'S CORNER BOOK PRIZE ANNOUNCES SHORTLIST

CHAPEL HILL, NC – The Crook's Corner Book Prize, awarded annually for the best debut novel set in the American South, has announced its Shortlist today. The winner will be chosen this year by the National Book Award-winning novelist, Charles Frazier. The \$5000 prize, inspired by the prestigious book awards given by famous Parisian literary cafés, is co-sponsored by the iconic Southern restaurant, Crook's Corner, in Chapel Hill, NC.

“No one has a tougher time getting published and gaining recognition than first-time novelists,” says Anna Hayes, president of the Crook's Corner Book Prize Foundation. “Our goal is to offer a timely boost to new talent.”

Although eligible books must be set predominantly in the South, the prize is open to writers from anywhere.

The Shortlist is:

[THE ATLAS OF REDS AND BLUES](#) by Devi S. Laskar (Counterpoint Press)

In a time-bending mind-flash as she lies bleeding from a police gunshot wound, the protagonist of *The Atlas of Reds and Blues*, known only as Mother, revisits her life as a successful child of immigrants to America from India. Devi S. Laskar is a native of Chapel Hill, N.C. She holds an MFA from Columbia University in New York, an MA in South Asian Studies from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a BA in journalism and English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

[SUGAR LAND](#) by Tammy Lynne Stoner (Red Hen Press)

In the Midland, Texas of 1923, a girl who falls in love with her best (girl)friend seeks sanctuary in the safest place she can think of, working at the Sugar Land Prison for men. Against the background of Texas from Prohibition through the civil rights era, she weds the prison warden, befriends legendary blues singer Leadbelly, and searches for the key to her own prison. Tammy Lynne Stoner was born in Midland, Texas and has been published in two dozen journals and anthologies. She is also the publisher of *Gertrude*, the longest consecutively published queer journal.

[LOT: STORIES](#) by Bryan Washington (Riverhead Books)

Bryan Washington's Houston, Texas doesn't mention much about oil or pickup trucks. It's about today's Houston, a sprawling and multiethnic city in which a vibrant underclass is bouncing, sliding, and shooting the rapids of the American system as its people try to make a home in it. Family, community, love, work, and the human connections that make a life are Washington's subjects. A resident of Houston, his fiction and essays have

appeared in the *New York Times*, the *New York Times Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Style Magazine*, *BuzzFeed*, *Vulture*, *The Paris Review*, *Boston Review*, *Tin House*, and more. He's also the recipient of an O. Henry Award.

The winner will be announced on January 6, 2020. For more information about the prize, visit www.crookscornerbookprize.com.

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