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CROOK'S CORNER BOOK PRIZE ANNOUNCES SHORTLIST

Chapel Hill, North Carolina – 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 from the Shortlist by [Ron Rash](#), author of the PEN/Faulkner finalist and New York Times bestselling novel *Serena*, in addition to four other critically acclaimed novels, four collections of poems, and six collections of stories. The \$5,000 prize, inspired by the prestigious book awards given by famous Parisian literary cafés, is awarded by the [Crook's Corner Book Prize Foundation](#). Although eligible books must be set predominantly in the South, the prize is open to writers from anywhere.

As COVID-19 persists in wreaking havoc across the globe, writers, booksellers, and publishers have been especially impacted. “It seemed we were having a reprieve from the pandemic, but with the Delta variant sweeping through our communities, many events, like bookstore readings, continue to be cancelled,” says Foundation president Anna Hayes. “This has an especially negative effect on debut novelists, who need to be out promoting their new work. We’re proud of all the authors on our Shortlist and hope to help them gain the attention they deserve.”

The Shortlist is:

- [THE PROPHETS](#) by Robert Jones, Jr. (G.P. Putnam's Sons)
Portraying the enormous, heroic power of love, this novel is about the forbidden union between two enslaved young men on a Deep South plantation, the refuge they find in each other, and a betrayal that threatens their existence. Jones is from New York City and received his BFA in creative writing, and MFA in fiction from Brooklyn College. He has written for numerous publications, including The New York Times, Essence, and The Paris Review.

- [THE GIRLS IN THE STILT HOUSE](#) by Kelly Mustian (Sourcebooks Landmark)
Set in 1920s Mississippi, this debut Southern novel weaves a beautiful and harrowing story of two teenage girls cast in an unlikely partnership through murder. Mustian grew up in Natchez, Mississippi and currently lives near the foothills of North Carolina. Her work has appeared in numerous literary journals and commercial magazines, and her short fiction has won a Blumenthal Writers and Readers Series Award. She is a past recipient of a Regional Artist Grant from the North Carolina Arts and Science Council.
- [THINGS WE LOST TO THE WATER](#) by Eric Nguyen (Alfred A. Knopf)
As they search for identity—as individuals and as a family—an immigrant Vietnamese family settles in New Orleans and struggles to remain connected to one another as their lives are inexorably reshaped. Nguyen earned an MFA in creative writing from McNeese State University in Louisiana and now lives in Washington, DC. He has been awarded fellowships from Lambda Literary, Voices of Our Nation Arts (VONA), and the Tin House Writers Workshop. He is also the Editor in Chief of [diaCRITICS](#).

The Crook's Corner Book Prize honors the iconic Crook's Corner Restaurant, which for 40 years was a culinary, literary, and artistic beacon in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Sadly, Crook's Corner closed in 2021. However, the Crook's Corner Book Prize will continue its annual award, an ongoing homage.

The winner will be announced in January 2022. For more information on the Prize and submission guidelines, please visit www.crookscornerbookprize.com or follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

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