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CONTACT: cindyhsellers@gmail.com

CROOK'S CORNER BOOK PRIZE SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED
\$5,000 Prize to be Awarded for Best Debut Novel Set in the South

CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA, SEPTEMBER 17, 2024—Today, the Crook's Corner Book Prize Foundation announces the three finalists for best debut novel set in the American South. "It is really exciting to see emerging novelists interpreting life in the American South, past and present, from the perspective of 2024," says Anna Hayes, Foundation President. The winner of the \$5000 prize will be announced in January 2025.

The Shortlist is:

- "Banyan Moon" by Thao Thai (Mariner Books/Harper Collins) - Spanning decades and continents, from 1960s Vietnam to the wild swamplands of the Florida coast, "Banyan Moon" is a stunning and deeply moving story of mothers and daughters, the things we inherit, and the lives we choose to make out of that inheritance.
- "Coleman Hill" by Kim Foote (SJP Lit) - "Coleman Hill" is the exhilarating story of two American families whose fates become intertwined in the wake of the Great Migration. Braiding fact and fiction, it is a remarkable, character-rich tour de force exploring the ties that bind three generations.
- "Fireworks Every Night" - by Beth Raymer (Penguin Random House) This tumultuous coming-of-age novel features an unforgettable protagonist, a character who narrates her life story with dark comedy and compassion for her family, even as she is failed by them. Those failures are the backbone of this surprisingly poignant story about hard bargains,

family loyalties, and the grit of a woman determined to create a better life for herself than the one she was born into.

Although eligible books must be predominantly set in the South, authors may live anywhere, and all genres of fiction, except for Young Adult, are eligible.

Judging for this year's Prize is [Megan Mayhew Bergman](#). She is the author of the short story collections "Birds of a Lesser Paradise," "Almost Famous Women," and "How Strange A Season," which was longlisted for the 2023 Joyce Carol Oates Fiction Prize, the Story Prize, and the Mark Twain American Voice in Literature Award. In 2019, her column for *The Guardian* on the American South and climate change won the Reed Environmental Journalism Award from the Southern Environmental Law Center. She is now the Director of the Bread Loaf Environmental Writers Conference at Middlebury College, where she also teaches in the undergraduate Creative Writing Department.

About the Crook's Corner Book Prize

Inspired by the literary prizes awarded by famous Parisian cafés such as the Deux Magots and the Café de Flore, the Crook's Corner Book Prize honors the iconic Crook's Corner, 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 continues its annual award, a fitting homage to the unforgettable restaurant. 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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