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**‘Oye’ by Melissa Mogollon, wins 2026 Crook’s Corner Book Prize  
\$5,000 prize awarded for best debut novel set in the American South**

**CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA, JANUARY 12, 2026**—“[Oye](#)” by Melissa Mogollon, (Hogarth Press) is the winner of the 13th annual Crook’s Corner Book Prize for the best debut novel set in the American South.

Selected by this year’s judge, renowned author and creative writing professor [Clyde Edgerton](#), “Oye” is a coming-of-age story structured as a series of one-sided phone calls from a Colombian-American teenager, Luciana, to her older sister, Mari, during Hurricane Irma in 2017 in South Florida.

“Melissa Mogollon took chances in constructing her novel, ‘Oye,’” Edgerton says. “An entire novel narrated in a series of phone calls? And the reader gets to hear only one of the two speakers? With inserted dialogue flashbacks here and there...I couldn’t stop reading, and the story never slowed down, never missed a beat. The narrative was doused in suspense, tension, and humor. To top off my reading experience: the story deals with the most ancient of groups – family – in the most ancient of ways: through love. Big congratulations to Melissa Mogollon. Watch out – she is bound to surprise and delight readers with a second novel, and for a long time to come.”

The winner was chosen from the Shortlist announced in September 2025. The Shortlist included “[Sky Full of Elephants](#)” by Cebo Campbell, Simon & Schuster, “Oye” by Melissa Mogollon, Hogarth Press, and “[Like Happiness](#)” by Ursula Villarreal-Moura, Celadon Books.

Melissa Mogollon holds an MFA in fiction from the Iowa Writers’ Workshop and a BA from The George Washington University. Originally from Colombia and raised in Florida, she now teaches at a boarding school in Rhode Island, where she lives with her partner and dog.

The Crook’s Corner Book Prize, established as a collaboration between the iconic Southern

restaurant Crook's Corner in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and the Crook's Corner Book Prize Foundation, was inspired by the prestigious book awards long given by famous “literary cafés” in Paris. Submissions are now open for next year’s prize. For more information on the Prize and submission guidelines, please visit [CrooksCornerBookPrize.com](http://CrooksCornerBookPrize.com) or follow us on [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

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