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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Crook's Corner Book Prize 14th Annual Longlist Announced

Chapel Hill, North Carolina (August 28, 2026)—The Crook's Corner Book Prize Foundation today announced its annual Longlist for best debut novel set in the American South. The \$5,000 prize winner will be announced in January 2027.

The 2027 Longlist is:

- [**The Resettlement of Vesta Blonik**](#) by Denise Smith Cline, Regal House Publishing
- [**God Is Harder on Girls**](#) by Ella Dodson, Chapel Hill Press
- [**If the Dead Belong Here**](#) by Carson Faust, Viking
- [**Leaving Edgefield: Carrie Butler's Story**](#) by Carolyn W. Hooker, Evening Post Books
- [**The Fantasies of Future Things**](#) by Doug Jones, Simon & Schuster
- [**Junah at the End of the World**](#) by Dan Leach, Hub City Press
- [**This Here Is Love**](#) by Princess Joy L. Perry, W. W. Norton & Company
- [**To the Moon and Back**](#) by Eliana Ramage, Avid Reader Press / Simon & Schuster
- [**The Slip**](#) by Lucas Schaefer, Simon & Schuster

"The depth and diversity of Southern storytelling continues to astound us year after year," said Anna Hayes, Crook's Corner Book Prize founder. "This year's remarkable debut novels represent the evolving landscape of Southern literature, bringing fresh perspectives, distinctive voices and compelling stories to our literary tradition. From

historical fiction to contemporary stories of family, identity and belonging, this year's longlist demonstrates that Southern fiction remains as vital and diverse as ever."

Judging this year's Prize is acclaimed author [Katy Simpson Smith](#). Born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi, Smith is the author of the novels *The Maltese Version*, *The Story of Land and Sea*, *Free Men*, *The Everlasting*, and *The Weeds*, as well as *We Have Raised All of You: Motherhood in the South, 1750–1835*. She received a PhD in history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an MFA from the Bennington Writing Seminars. She currently teaches fiction at the Bennington College Writing Seminars and lives in New Orleans.

The Crook's Corner Book Prize continues to highlight emerging fiction writers, who typically face some of the toughest obstacles in publishing. 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. The 2026 Prize was awarded in January to Melissa Mogollon's *Oye*, published by Hogarth.

The Crook's Corner Book Prize Shortlist will be announced in September.

For more information on the Prize and submission guidelines, please visit www.CrooksCornerBookPrize.com or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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 \$5,000 award for the best debut novel set in the American South, a fitting homage to the unforgettable restaurant.