

28 February 2014 *For immediate release*

The Poetry Society announces the shortlist for the Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry



**TED HUGHES
AWARD FOR
NEW WORK
IN POETRY**

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The Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry seeks to recognise excellence in poetry, highlighting outstanding contributions made by poets to our cultural life.

Established in 2009 by **Carol Ann Duffy**, the £5,000 prize is funded with the annual honorarium the Poet Laureate traditionally receives from HM The Queen. The award is one of the only prizes to acknowledge the wide range of work being produced by poets – not just in books, but beyond. Previous winners have included Kate Tempest, for her spoken word piece *Brand New Ancients* in 2012, and Lavinia Greenlaw, for her poetry sound work *Audio Obscura* in 2011.

Artist **Eileen Cooper** joins poets **Sean Borodale** and **Denise Riley** on the judging panel this year. Selecting from a wide range of work across all media, the judges have chosen a shortlist of five poets. The final winner will be announced at an awards reception in London on 28 March. Judge Sean Borodale said of the judging process:

“Shortlisting for the Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry has given us great pleasure, not least because we were able to agree amicably on which works should go forward. The range of approach and level of ambition made our job rewarding, and we looked for unconventional forms in our choices, but also for poetry which breathes and lives close to life. Sadly, as always, we have had to let many fine works slip the net and we would like to thank all the poets we considered for their remarkable poems. It is excellent to work with a prize which offers such broad margins to the definition of poetry and how it finds a shape in the world.”

The following poets have been shortlisted for the Award, for new poetry presented in the UK during 2013. **Steve Ely, Chris McCabe, Maggie Sawkins, Hannah Silva** and **Zoë Skoulding**.

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Steve Ely

Steve Ely for *Oswald's Book of Hours*

Oswald's Book of Hours is a series of elegies and eulogies for Oswald redivivus, written in the voices of an unlikely band of northern subversives, including NUM leader Arthur Scargill, hermit Richard Rolle, brigand John Nevison, Catholic rebel Robert Aske – and Oswald himself. *Oswald's Book of Hours* is an ambitious attempt to rehabilitate an organic English identity via an exploration of radical, pre-industrial and pre-reformation traditions, and a handbook of devotions for the exiled and expropriate English settled north of the Humber. *Oswald's Book of Hours* is published by Smokestack.



Chris McCabe

Chris McCabe for *Pharmapoetica*

Pharmapoetica is collaboration between Poet Chris McCabe and Medical Herbalist and Artist Maria Vlotides. Initially conceived as an art installation consisting of a “medical cabinet of poems” about plants used pharmacologically, it has developed to include an accompanying book, a formulary of sorts, that not only contains the ten poems but images of the installation and working notes on which the poems are based. *Pharmapoetica* is published by Pedestrian Publishing.



Maggie Sawkins

Maggie Sawkins for *Zones of Avoidance*

Zones of Avoidance is a multimedia live literature production written and performed by Maggie Sawkins and directed by Mark C Hewitt. - 'A Word Dance into the Void of Addiction' Join the narrator's quest to discover the lure of psychoactive substances following her daughter's descent into addiction. This multimedia live literature production captures the surreal mundanity of living with addiction and combines the poet's moving testimony with the voices of addicts in recovery. *Zones of Avoidance* was first performed as part of Portsmouth Bookfest in October 2013.



Hannah Silva

Hannah Silva for *Total Man*

In 1972 Stan Gooch published *The Total Man*, notes towards an evolutionary theory of personality. This extensive volume spans magic, religion, politics, art, morality and justice. Gooch discusses topics including whether or not Labour MPs have larger ears than Conservatives, and neurotics larger ears than psychotics. In this new commission, poet, playwright and performer Hannah Silva channels Gooch and explores his story through a musical layering of words, speech, quotations and virtuosic linguistic and vocal play. *Total Man* was commissioned by Penned in the Margins and Mercy for Electronic Voice Phenomena.



Zoë Skoulding

Zoë Skoulding for *The Museum of Disappearing Sounds*

The disappearing sounds of Zoë Skoulding's new collection may be either in the rich sonic environments that the poems observe, or in the resonance of words themselves, which exist in traces of speech and breath. Skoulding's characteristically inventive approach to form emerges in a fractured sonnet sequence based on the coincidences of room numbers. Repeated actions build haunting interior spaces which the reader is invited to enter, each poem becoming a room in which sound 'bounces off four walls', as memory accumulates in the subtle rhythms of everyday life. These poems can provoke states of eerie unease, or of passion evoked with shimmering densities of verbal texture. Exploratory and alive to the senses, *The Museum of Disappearing Sounds* creates new perspectives on language and the world in which it exists. *The Museum of Disappearing Sounds* is published by Seren.

– ENDS –

For further information or to arrange interviews please contact Robyn Donaldson on 020 7420 9886 or email rdonaldson@poetrysociety.org.uk

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Notes to Editors:

TED HUGHES AWARD JUDGES



Sean Borodale was Northern Arts Fellow of the Wordsworth Trust in 1999 and Guest Artist at the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam in 2002. From 2002-7 he was a teaching fellow at the Slade School of Fine Art, UCL. His long topographical work *Notes for an Atlas* was recommended by Robert Macfarlane in the *Guardian* Summer Books 2005. It was performed in 2007 at the Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall, directed by Mark Rylance, as part of the first London Festival of Literature. Recent projects include *Grey Matter* with artist Jonathan Houlding which included a residency at the Fundacion Pilar i Joan Miro, Mallorca, 2009. *Bee Journal*, his debut full-length collection of poems was published by Jonathan Cape in 2012. He was selected as a Granta New Poet in 2012 and was recently shortlisted for the T.S. Eliot Prize and the Costa Book Award.



Eileen Cooper
Photo: Anne Purkiss

Painter and printmaker **Eileen Cooper** RA studied at Goldsmith's College and Royal College of Art, London. She was appointed Keeper of the Royal Academy Schools in 2011, the first female officer of the RA since it was founded in 1768. She has had solo exhibitions at Air Gallery, Benjamin Rhodes Gallery and the Dulwich Picture Gallery (all London); Castlefield Gallery, Manchester; Artsite, Bath; and Glasgow Print Studio. *Eileen Cooper at 50* was shown at Art First in London and New York. Her work has featured in many group and international touring exhibitions including: *The New British Painting*; *The Outsider: British Figuration Now*; *Picturing People and Innocence and Experience*. She has been represented by Art First since 1997



Denise Riley
Photo: Kevin Lake

Denise Riley has a background in both poetry and academia. She is currently Professor of Poetry and the History of Ideas at the University of East Anglia. Riley's many collections of poetry include *Penguin Modern Poets 10* (with Douglas Oliver and Ian Sinclair), and *Denise Riley: Selected Poems*. She edited *Poets on Writing; Britain 1970-1991*. Her recent work studies philosophies of self-presence, the neurophenomenology of self-awareness, and the history of understandings of inner speech and how these enter into our ideas of what's interior and what's outside. Her long poem sequence 'A Part Song' won the Forward Prize for Best Single Poem, and was shortlisted for the Ted Hughes Award (both 2012).

TED HUGHES AWARD SHORTLISTED POETS

Steve Ely is a poet, novelist and biographer from Yorkshire. *Oswald's Book of Hours* is his first published book of poetry. His second, *England*, will be published by Smokestack next year. His novel *Ratmen* is published by Blackheath Books. He's just completed *Made in Mexborough: Ted Hughes's South Yorkshire*, a biographical work about the late Laureate's neglected Mexborough period. He's currently writing poetry about football, genocide and the mediaeval hermit Richard Rolle.

Chris McCabe's collections are *The Hutton Inquiry*, *Zeppelins* and *THE RESTRUCTURE* and he has recorded a CD with the Poetry Archive. His plays *Shad Thames*, *Broken Wharf* and *Mudflats* have been performed in London and Liverpool. His prose book about the dead poets of West Norwood Cemetery, *In the Catacombs*, and his next poetry collection will both be published by Pinned in the Margins in 2014. He works as the Poetry Librarian at The Saison Poetry Library and teaches for The Poetry School.

Hannah Silva is a Birmingham based poet and playwright. She has performed internationally and throughout the UK at festivals including Latitude and StAnza. Her work for theatre includes a solo show *Opposition*, a play for a large cast of teenage girls *Orchid* and *The Disappearance of Sadie Jones*. Her radioplay *Marathon Tales* (co-written with Colin Teevan for BBC Radio 3) won the Tinniswood Award. Her debut poetry collection *Forms of Protest* is published by Pinned in the Margins.

Maggie Sawkins has written poetry since she was a child. Her two poetry collections are *Charcot's Pet* (Flarestack, 2003) and *The Zig Zag Woman* (Two Ravens Press, 2007). Maggie works with people in recovery from addiction, and teaches students with specific learning difficulties at South Downs College, near Portsmouth. In 2003 she founded Tongues&Grooves Poetry and Music Club. Last year she represented Portsmouth on the T.S. Eliot Poetry Prize 20th Anniversary Tour.

Zoë Skoulding is a poet, translator, editor and critic. She has published four collections of poetry, most recently *The Museum of Disappearing Sounds* (Seren, 2013) and *Remains of a Future City* (Seren, 2008), poems from which have been widely translated. She has performed her work at many international festivals, often incorporating electronic sound in her readings as well as collaborating with musicians. She is Senior Lecturer in the School of English at Bangor University.

THE POETRY SOCIETY

The Poetry Society was founded in 1909 to promote a "more general recognition and appreciation of poetry". Since then, it has grown into one of Britain's most dynamic arts organisations, representing British poetry both nationally and internationally. With innovative education and commissioning programmes and a packed calendar of performances, readings and competitions, the Poetry Society champions poetry for all ages. It publishes the magazine *Poetry Review*, runs the National Poetry Competition, the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award and the youth performance poetry championship SLAMBassadors UK. www.poetrysociety.org.uk

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