

PRESS RELEASE



The Royal Society of Literature

PETER ADAMSON

WINS

the £1,000 Royal Society of Literature V.S. Pritchett Memorial Prize 2013

with his short story

Sahel

Judges Adam Foulds, Jackie Kay and Helen Simpson have selected the winning short story for the V.S. Pritchett Memorial Prize 2013. The prize, now in its thirteenth year, is awarded for the year's best unpublished short story.

Sahel, written by **Peter Adamson**, the winner of this year's V.S. Pritchett Memorial Prize, was described by Adam Foulds as an '**excellent story in which a vivid landscape speaks as much as the characters do**'. Helen Simpson enjoyed '**the quiet but telling specificity of detail**' and Jackie Kay heralded '**the arrival of a confident and different narrative voice**'.

The runner-up is **Rowena Macdonald** for her story ***Stars***, which Jackie Kay described as a '**touching story deftly done - it brilliantly captures the child's point of view**'. Adam Foulds noted that '**as in all good short stories, the characters are larger than the form in which they appear**'.

History of the prize

The V.S. Pritchett Memorial Prize was founded by the RSL at the beginning of the new millennium to commemorate the centenary of an author widely regarded as the finest English short story writer of the 20th century, and to preserve a tradition encompassing Pritchett's mastery of narrative.

In addition to his £1,000 prize, the winner also appeared at an RSL event with author Roddy Doyle on Monday 28 October. The winning story will appear in the *RSL Review* and will be published online in *Prospect Magazine*.

Notes to Editors

The winner and runner-up

Peter Adamson was founding editor of the *New Internationalist*, a magazine about world development published monthly since 1973. For many years he was senior adviser to the Executive Director of UNICEF I New York with responsibility for the annual State of the World's Children report (1981-1996) and Progress of Nations, an annual record of progress in meeting basic human needs. He is also the author of *Facts for Life: the health information every family has a right to know* co-published by seven United Nations agencies in 215 languages. Working with the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence, he initiated the Report Card series to monitor child poverty in OECD nations and has been series editor for the last 12 years. He is also the author of *The Tuscan Master* and *Facing Out to Sea*, both published by Hodder, and is currently working on a new novel, *The Kennedy Moment*. He has been married for 45 years to Lesley Adamson who is also his professional partner. The couple have two children and live in Oxfordshire. Delighted to be awarded the V.S. Pritchett Memorial Prize for his very first short story, **Adamson described his story *Sahel* as having 'its origins in notes and memories from a series of visits to West Africa many years ago - I was there to study a project to help villagers resist the gradual encroachment of the Sahara and spent many hours listening in fields and huts across Yatenga'.**

Rowena Macdonald was born on the Isle of Wight, grew up in the West Midlands and now lives in east London. *Smoked Meat* (Flambard Press), her debut collection of interlinked short stories, was shortlisted for the 2012 Edge Hill Prize and longlisted for the Frank O'Connor Prize. Rowena works at the House of Commons and teaches creative writing at Westminster University. Recently she has had stories published in the *Warwick Review*, *Connecting Nothing with Something* (Influx Press), *Unthology 4* (Unthank Books), *Red Room* (Unthank Books) and the *Galley Beggar Press Singles Club*. She is currently finishing a novel. The story *Stars* was also shortlisted for the Bath Short Story Prize this year and will be published by Hearst Magazines UK as an eBook with the other shortlistees this autumn. **Macdonald declared she was 'thrilled to be the runner-up. It's a really prestigious prize'.**

The Royal Society of Literature

With around 25 events every year, the RSL presents talks and conversations from some of the most exciting writers working in the English Language. Forthcoming speakers include **Nadeem Aslam, Margaret Atwood, Margaret Drabble, Richard Eyre, Alan Hollinghurst, Ian McEwan, Deborah Moggach, Kamila Shamsie and Iain Sinclair**. Events take place at Somerset House and with partner organisations such as the National Portrait Gallery and King's College London. The RSL also offers a programme of Masterclasses in collaboration with the Booker Prize Foundation.

In addition to the V.S. Pritchett Memorial Prize, the RSL awards annually the RSL Ondaatje Prize, three RSL Jerwood Awards for Non-Fiction (for first major commissioned works) and RSL Brookleaze Grants.

Press should contact Annette Brook:
Telephone **020 7845 4680** Email **annette@rslit.org**