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## DOROTHY HEWETT AWARD FOR AN UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT ANNOUNCES 2022 WINNER



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UWA Publishing, with thanks to the Copyright Agency, is excited to be announcing the winner of the 2022 Dorothy Hewett Award for an Unpublished Manuscript: Brendan Ritchie for his manuscript *Eta Draconis*.

Brendan Ritchie will receive a publishing contract and manuscript development with UWA Publishing and \$10,000 prize money.

*Eta Draconis* will be released in 2023.

The judging panel for the 2022 Award was Tony Hughes-d'Aeth, Leni Shilton, Astrid Edwards and Eleanor Hurt. They noted that the events that have shaped our experiences in the last two years have provided fertile material for Australian writers. More information on the award, the shortlistees and the judges can be found on the UWA Publishing website.

In 2021 the Award received over 350 entries and the Judges announced joint winners, with two young fiction writers sharing the award. Joshua Kemp's *Banjawarn* (submitted as 'Strangest Places') was released in February 2022 and Kgshak Akec's *Hopeless Kingdom* was released in August 2022. Previous winners include Karen Wyld's *Where the Fruit Falls* and the inaugural winner, *Extinctions* by Josephine Wilson, which went on to win the Miles Franklin Literary Award.

UWA Publishing thanks the Copyright Agency for its ongoing support for the Dorothy Hewett Award and congratulates Brendan Ritchie on his achievement.

Dorothy Hewett (1923-2002) is considered one of Australia's most important writers, her work challenging the norms of 20th century Australian culture. Hewett made her mark as a poet, playwright and novelist. In 1986, Hewett was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for her services to literature. Hewett won the Western Australian Premier's Poetry Award in 1994 and 1995 for her collections *Peninsula* and *Collected Poems: 1940-1995*.



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Brendan Ritchie is an early-career novelist and academic from the south-coast of WA. In 2015 he published his debut novel *Carousel* and was awarded a PhD in Creative Writing. *Carousel* was critically acclaimed and described by the Sydney Morning Herald as ‘the sort of thing that might happen if Kafka wrote a script for Big Brother.’ The sequel, *Beyond Carousel*, was released in 2016 and Brendan has also published poetry and non-fiction in several notable journals and collections.

In addition to writing, Brendan coordinates an academic enabling program at Edith Cowan University. He lives on Wadandi land with his wife and two young daughters.

*Eta Draconis* is a road novel set in a world besieged by a long and destructive meteor shower. The story follows two sisters as they journey from their small coastal town to the city ahead of the coming semester. The relationship between the sisters is fractured and fading. Turned upside down by the meteorites that arrived at the start of their adolescence and the strange world they have inhabited since. As the showering intensifies and their way forward becomes threatened, the sisters are forced to confront their problems and recalibrate their hopes for the future.

“This manuscript was born out of my own road trips between home and university. Eight hours of silent, shifting landscape to ponder my place within the world as it finally began to open up in front of me. And out of an endless fascination with the universe - creation and destruction resting so vividly above.”

Judges comments:

Life on earth undergoes a complex change as meteorites begin to rain down from the dying star Eta Draconis. The world does not collapse, but old certainties disappear and a new mood falls over human societies. A road narrative set in Western Australia’s southwest, *Eta Draconis* follows two sisters as they survive in these complicated times. A poetic and compelling novel for the COVID moment.



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