

# DOROTHY HEWETT AWARD FOR AN UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT ANNOUNCES 2023 SHORTLIST



UWA Publishing is excited to be announcing the shortlist for the 2023 Dorothy Hewett Award for an Unpublished Manuscript. The shortlist is as follows:

The Bone Singer by Christine Bell
Depth of Field by Kirsty Iltners
99 Names by Lukas Jackson
Along the Lightning Ridge by Nakita Kitson
The Hum Hearers by Shey Marque
Francesca Multimortal by Val Colic-Peisker
Semblance by Vivienne Glance

The judging panel for the 2023 Award is Tony Hughes-d'Aeth, Astrid Edwards, Thuy On and Kate Pickard. This year the award received over 220 entries from across Australia. The judges were highly impressed, and slightly overwhelmed, by the quantity and quality of entrants to this award. Arriving at this shortlist has been a challenging and exciting task. The list represents a snapshot of the vitality of Australian writing. More information on the judges can be found on the UWA Publishing website.

In 2022 the judges announced the winner of the award to be Brendan Ritchie for his manuscript *Eta Draconis* which will be available on 14 May 2023. Previous winners include Josh Kemp's *Banjawarn*, Kgshak Akec's *Hopeless Kingdom*, 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.

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.

The Award is open to manuscripts of fiction, narrative nonfiction or poetry and the winner will receive a cash prize of \$10,000, courtesy of Copyright Agency Cultural Fund, and will be offered a publishing contract with UWA Publishing.

UWA Publishing sends a warm thank you to the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund for its ongoing support for the Dorothy Hewett Award. The winner will be announced in June.



For all enquiries contact the UWA Publishing Marketing Department

MAIL M419, 35 Stirling Hwy, Crawley WA 6009, Australia

TEL +61 8 6488 3670

EMAIL marketing-uwap@uwa.edu.au WEB www.uwap.com.au

SOCIAL @uwapublishing

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# Judges comments:

#### The Bone Singer

The Bone Singer tenderly evokes the aftermath of the Great War through the eyes of Hugo Maitland, a soldier who has volunteered with the Australian War Graves Detachment to recover bodies of fallen Australians in the Somme. In the grim singularity of Hugo's task, the novel explores the vicissitudes of recovery and solace. The novel is a profound story about the rediscovery of life in the midst of unimaginable destruction.

# Depth of Field

In this gripping novel, the camera becomes the encryption of what is known and what escapes the frame. With its casually clipped first-person narration, and alternating narrative perspectives, Depth of Field asks questions about the reliability of memory and the conditions of representation. Shutter-speed, aspect ratio, apertures, depth of field, the metrics of light—the mechanisms of photography are allowed to falter just enough to expose the fragility of the images and moments that make up life.

#### 99 Names

Set within the families of Sydney's Lebanese diaspora, 99 Names is a visceral coming-of-age story. The novel shows how the conflicts and traumas funnel downwards and reach their crisis point in 'the kid'. The novel vividly evokes the impasses of migrant experience and how these refract through generations. It is a moving story which deals with both the challenges of life's extremities and the seductions of extremist solutions.

## Along the Lightning Ridge

Along the Lightning Ridge is a powerful historical novel set near the southern capes of Western Australia in the early colonial moment. It is a sensitive reimagining of the interface between colonial femininity and its encounter with the radical difference of people and environment. With echoes of the life of Georgiana Molloy, the heroine Georgie catalogues the plants that surround her in this new place and becomes intimately enmeshed in the life of the Noongar whose land she is helping to conquer.

### The Hum Hearers

Brilliantly observational and meditative, the poems in The Hum Hearers detonate like muffled explosions. Generational trauma is counterbalanced by hidden wells of resilience and subterranean solidarities. The poems, written in sprung prose, offer the counter-memories of women held together by the cycles of life that fall upon them with quiet devastation. The piquant aphorisms and subtle epiphanies in these poems rewrite the banalities of experience in a newly epic register.

#### Francesca Multimortal

Francesca Multimortal is a daring and profound novel that cascades through the reincarnations of Francesca as she lives out her lives at pivotal points in European history. Recently diagnosed with terminal cancer, the latest Francesca is 58 years old and living in Covid-stricken Melbourne. It is from this vantage point that the previous lives unfold with a subtle and mesmerising force. A beautifully realised novel that opens up the dimensions of life and how it is to be a woman.

# Semblance

Semblance is a big-hearted eco-novel set within the battle to save the southern forests of Western Australia. The pacing of the novel, and its sense of moment, makes you feel the urgency of a crisis that moves between its human and more-than-human actors. Semblance pulses with a fierce immediacy, dense with the sense impressions of forest life. It also unfolds as a powerful crime story, but one which asks us to fully understand the nature of crime in the Anthropocene.



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