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UWA Publishing
May 2024



DOROTHY HEWETT AWARD ANNOUNCES 2024 SHORTLIST

UWA Publishing, with the support of the Copyright Agency, is excited to be announcing the shortlist for the 2024 Dorothy Hewett Award. The shortlist is as follows:

The Protector of Fledglings by Angella Whitton, NSW
Vanishment by Jeremy Tager, QLD
Past and Parallel Lives by Kaya Ortiz, WA
The Lost House by Kimberley Lipschus, NSW
The Fear of Empty Spaces by Rachel Bowman, QLD
My Heart is a Plastic Shoe by Rhian Healy, WA

The judging panel for the 2024 Award is Tony Hughes-d'Aeth, Astrid Edwards, Thuy On and Kate Pickard. The judges were heartened by the number of submissions to the Dorothy Hewett Award, well over 200 – across all categories: fiction, narrative non-fiction and poetry. Bringing the numbers down to a shortlist was a difficult and at times contentious exercise but we are confident the six proffered here are a sterling representation of all that is good in Australian literature today. More information about the judges can be found on the [Dorothy Hewett Award Instagram page](#).

In 2023, the judges announced Queensland writer Kirsty Iltner as the winner of the award for her manuscript *Depth of Field* which was recently published at the beginning of May. The inaugural winner of the award was Josephine Wilson for her manuscript *Extinctions* which went on to win the 2017 Miles Franklin Literary Award.

The award is named after Dorothy Hewett (1923-2002) who is considered one of Australia's most important writers, her work challenging the norms of 20th century Australian culture. The Dorothy Hewett Award is open to Australian writers of fiction, narrative non-fiction and poetry and the winner will receive \$10,000 courtesy of the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund and a publishing contract with UWA Publishing.

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

For all enquiries, please contact the UWA Publishing Marketing Department

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Judges' comments:

***The Protector of Fledglings* by Angella Whitton**

Frances, a socially withdrawn librarian, sees her brother in the park one afternoon. Only, her brother had died when he was a child. Was Frances seeing a ghost? Had there been some incredible mistake? Yet she is sure this man is her brother. Reminiscent of a number of recent Japanese novels, the world of Frances is both haunted and humorous. A tender story of mystery and self-discovery.

***Vanishment* by Jeremy Tager**

Vanishment is a novel of ecology and the environment, and also of surprises. The work deftly weaves unexpected viewpoints not often seen in Australian literature, and questions the structures of our lives, including academia and the act of whistleblowing.

***Past and Parallel Lives* by Kaya Ortiz**

Past & Parallel Lives is a poetic offering that thrums in liminal spaces. It's about the migratory experience, the queer body, the unfixed, confused identity carving a space in the world. It's about borrowed languages, (un)belonging, and attempts of navigating treacherous cultural and racial expectations with courage and grace.

***The Lost House* by Kimberley Lipschus**

This epic novel unfolds with the uncanny precision of a fairytale. Olivia falls into a dam and is rushed to hospital in a coma. Yet in another dimension, Olivia meets Jack, a boy living on his own in an abandoned house by a waterhole. Yet Jack has been living in this house for fifty-nine years. Where and what is this lost house? A spellbinding story of arrested life.

***The Fear of Empty Spaces* by Rachel Bowman**

This haunting historical novel is set in the station country of the east Murchison (Yamatji Country) in the 1930s and 40s. In the story of a missing woman, the novel evokes the hopes and sensibilities, as well as the prejudices and silences, of this era. The novel teases you to think that there is nothing quite as full as an empty space.

***My Heart is a Plastic Shoe* by Rhian Healy**

My Heart is a Plastic Shoe is a collection of poetry that explores the beauty, tenacity and wilfulness of mother earth and her bounties. Even a quick scan of its titles tell us that there will be odes about cabbage moths, flying fish, wattlebirds and birds of paradise. It sensitively captures the moods and impulses of humans and other living specimens.

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About the shortlistees:

Angella Whitton

Angella Whitton lives and writes in Western Sydney on Darug land. Her writing has been selected for the Varuna Eleanor Dark Flagship Fellowship 2024, the Exeter Novel Prize Longlist 2023, the Carmel Bird Digital Literary Award Shortlist 2020, the Nillumbik Prize for Contemporary Writing Shortlist 2020, the Victoria University/Overland Short Story Prize Shortlist 2019, and the Varuna Publisher Introduction Program Fellowship 2019. Her short stories have been published in *Westerly*, *the Australian Women's Weekly* and *Visible Ink*. She graduated with a Master of Arts (Research) in writing from the University of Sydney. She likes tea, art, rivers, books and plants.

Jeremy Tager

I have a degree in literature and a Juris Doctor in law. I am an environmental activist, a pretty incurable romantic, a fair musician, and I love nothing more than another mystery to celebrate. I have worked for Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, in Australia and overseas, on many of the most important environmental issues, including the Great Barrier Reef, overfishing, illegal timber, land clearing and climate change. I have worked on food and agricultural issues in many countries, including the US, Europe, China, India and Iran and been an environment advisor for both the Greens and Australian Democrats.

Kaya Ortiz

Kaya Ortiz is a queer Filipino poet of in/articulate identities and record-keeper of ancient histories. Kaya hails from the southern islands of Mindanao and Lutruwita/Tasmania and is obsessed with the fluidity of borders, memory and time. Their writing has appeared in *Portside Review*, *Westerly*, *Australian Poetry Journal*, *Best of Australian Poems 2021* and *After Australia* (Affirm Press 2020), among others. Kaya lives and writes on unceded Whadjuk Noongar country, where their name means 'hello' in the Noongar language.

Kimberley Lipschus

Kimberley Lipschus is a writer, filmmaker and psychotherapist living on the lands of the Bundjalung nation, Northern NSW. Her work explores the intersections between storytelling, and its potential to affect social and personal change. Holding an MA in Writing she has written and directed short films, documentary and radio and co-produced the flagship ABC panellist show, Q&A. Kimberley has published non-fiction, online and in psychotherapy journals. She is researching the gender storytelling gap using *The Heroine's Journey* as an alternative storytelling archetype. Kimberley straddles her creative life with her private therapy practice. *The Lost House* is her first novel.

Rachel Bowman

Rachel Bowman is a Brisbane, Queensland-based writer who strives to create beautiful, sentence-level writing—but ultimately wants to tell a great yarn. Rachel was an award-winning journalist before moving into science communication and public relations. She grew up on a property on the traditional lands of the Ngoorabul people in northern NSW and fell in love with the Western Australian landscape while studying rural journalism at Curtin University. Rachel was shortlisted for the 2023 Varuna-New England Writers Centre Fellowship and the 2024 Fish Short Story Competition. She continues to live with one foot in the city and the other in the country.

Rhian Healy

Rhian Healy is a Perth based writer with a fascination for the absurd. His poems have won the 2022 Philippa Holland Award for Poetry, the 2023 June Shenfield National Poetry Competition, the 2023 Annette Cameron Poetry Award, and have placed or been commended in the South Coast Writers Poetry Award, the Ros Spencer Poetry Award, and the Katharine Susannah Prichard Poetry Competition.

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