



HIGHLAND BOOK PRIZE DUAIS LEABHAIR NA GÀIDHEALTACHD

PRESS RELEASE

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Bilingual story collection wins the 2022 Highland Book Prize



Duncan Gillies' timeless collection of Gaelic and English short stories, *Crann-Fìge/ Fig Tree*, has won the 2022 Highland Book Prize.

Presented by the Highland Society of London, the winning title was announced at an online award ceremony hosted by Moniak Mhor, Scotland's Creative Writing Centre, from the hills above Loch Ness.

The audience enjoyed readings and discussion with all four of the shortlisted authors: Ali Smith, for *Companion Piece* (Hamish Hamilton); Tony Davidson, for *Confessions of a Highland Art Dealer* (Woodwose Books); and Cynthia Rogerson, for *WAH! Things I Never Told My Mother* (Sandstone Press).

Crann-Fìge/ Fig Tree, published by Acair Books, was **described by a member of the volunteer reading panel** as “a book that explores memory, legacy, and the value of culture and language. The stories are lucid and more often than not offer an unshowy luminosity.”

Another reader added, “This is masterful storytelling, with rich and very appropriate use of local Gaelic and deep knowledge of the Ness historical landscape.”

Judge, poet and writer, Peter Mackay said, “Donnchadh MacGillÌosa (Duncan Gillies) has long been one of the best short story writers in Gaelic. These stories show great psychological perspicuity, with a wonderfully light touch, and great understanding of what is important, how and why, in human lives, and especially how things might unexpectedly linger - and words gather individual meaning - over the course of years and decades. *Crann-Fìge* is a very strong collection, and a very deserving winner.”

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For more information contact Kirsteen Bell, Highland Book Prize Co-ordinator, on highlandbookprize@moniackmhor.org.uk or 07842 040 165.

Notes to Editors

- **Duncan Gillies** is from Knockaird, in Ness, the northern tip of the Isle of Lewis. *Fig Tree* is his fourth published collection of short stories and the first book of his in which Gaelic and English appear together, side by side.

'S ann às a' Chnoc Àrd ann an Nis a tha **Donnchadh MacGillÌosa**, an ceann-a-tuath Leòdhais. Seo an ceathramh cruinneachadh de sgeulachdan goirid aige air fhoillseachadh, agus a' chiad leabhar leis far a bheil a' Ghàidhlig is a' Bheurla còmhla, taobh ri taobh.

- **About Crann-Fìge/ Fig Tree**

A new bilingual collection of short stories from the author of *Tocasaid 'Ain Tuirc*, bringing the same sharp wit and observational skill to this evocation of Lewis life and people from last century intertwined with stories situated elsewhere, and giving as authentic a voice to an angry child's resentment, a woman's regret or an old man's fears.

Cruinneachadh sgeulachdan làidir, brìoghmhor eile bho ùghdar *Tocasaid 'Ain Tuirc*. Coltach ri sgeulachdan na *Tocasaid*, a tha a' togail ceann sa chruinneachadh seo cuideachd, ach lem blas is lem beatha fhèin. Tha feadhainn dhiubh suidhichte ann an Leòdhas san linn a chaidh, agus feadhainn suidhichte ann an àiteachan eile. Ach ge bith càite, eadar Nis agus Nèamh, tha iad uile air an innse ann an guth tarraingeach, dealbhach a tha a' cur diomb leanaibh an cèill a cheart cho soilleir, fìor 's a bheir e thugainn aithreachas boireannaich, no fiamh bodaich.

- **The Highland Book Prize**, established in 2017, celebrates the finest published work that recognises the rich talent, landscape, and cultural diversity of the Highlands. This annual prize is open to work in fiction, non-fiction, and poetry.

Presented by the Highland Society of London and facilitated by Moniack Mhor Creative Writing Centre, this literary prize aims to bring recognition to books created in or about the Highlands, and is open to books written about the Highlands & Islands; books written by residents of the Highlands & Islands; and writers who were born in the Highlands & Islands. The winner is awarded £2000 prize money and a week's writing retreat at Moniack Mhor Creative Writing Centre.

The William Grant Foundation provides funding to encourage public engagement with the Highland Book Prize.

www.highlandbookprize.org.uk

- **The Highland Society of London** is a charity which exists to promote and support the traditions and culture of the Highlands of Scotland.

www.highlandsocietyoflondon.org

- **Moniack Mhor Writers' Centre** is situated in a beautiful rural location in the Scottish Highlands, Teavarran, Kiltarlity, 14 miles outside Inverness. Since 1993, Moniack Mhor has been working with the finest writers from the UK and beyond to deliver creative writing courses, retreats, and other support for writers of all ages and abilities and from all walks of life.

Moniack Mhor is a registered charity and is supported by Creative Scotland as a Regularly Funded Organisation. It also offers courses, mentoring and a leadership programme for care experienced young people aged 14-26 in Scotland, via funding from Life Changes Trust.

The Centre also facilitates several writing awards as well as providing residential opportunities for professional, published artists to develop their work. It works closely with other key Scottish literature organisations and other UK and international partners, and runs a broad community programme. It also runs a wide programme of creative opportunities for care experienced young people in Scotland and provides writing tuition in Highland schools.

Moniack Mhor champions equality and aims to break down barriers to the creative process, including offering a bursary scheme to support fees where needed.

www.moniackmhor.org.uk

- The family shareholders of William Grant & Sons established **the William Grant Foundation** in 2014 as a non-profit association to oversee and direct their charitable donations. The William Grant Foundation is committed to a future where everyone in Scotland has the opportunity to thrive, a belief that is deeply rooted in the core values shared by the family and the company.

www.williamgrantfoundation.org.uk