

Dublin City Council announces the 2026 Dublin Literary Award Shortlist

Six novels have been shortlisted for the 2026 Dublin Literary Award, sponsored by Dublin City Council, which is now in its 31st year.

The titles in contention for the prize are:

- ***Gliff*** by Ali Smith
- ***In Late Summer*** by Magdalena Blažević, translated from the Croatian by Anđelka Raguž
- ***Live Fast*** by Brigitte Giraud, translated from the French by Cory Stockwell
- ***Perspectives*** by Laurent Binet, translated from the French by Sam Taylor
- ***The Emperor of Gladness*** by Ocean Vuong
- ***What I Know About You*** by Éric Chacour, translated from the French by Pablo Strauss

The diverse and international shortlist includes four novels in translation, three from French and one from Croatian, with authors who are American, Bosnian, British, and Canadian. Two debut novelists, Magdalena Blažević and Éric Chacour, feature on the shortlist.

Commenting on the shortlisted titles, the judging panel said:

Gliff by Ali Smith

“This seemingly modest plot, however, is the basis for a dystopian novel which will seem unsettlingly contemporary to any reader.”

In Late Summer by Magdalena Blažević (trans. Anđelka Raguž)

“Related with incredible restraint in a deeply authentic voice, the book also offers a timeless, universal tale of country life, childhood innocence and the way that everything can be ripped apart in the blink of an eye.”

Live Fast by Brigitte Giraud (trans. Cory Stockwell)

“For anyone who has ever experienced grief as a sense of ordinary decisions that have been over-taxed with consequence, this will be a novel with powerful resonance.”

Perspective(s) by Laurent Binet (trans. Sam Taylor)

“Filled with fun and irony, Binet affirms that the saviour of human life is faith in art and creation.”

The Emperor of Gladness by Ocean Vuong

“A delicate web of plots and subplots woven together masterfully by Ocean Vuong.”

What I Know About You by Éric Chacour (trans. Pablo Strauss)

“This is Éric Chacour’s debut novel which shows him to be a master storyteller with an impressive emotional feel.”

Read full citations from Judging Panel further below.

The Dublin Literary Award is the world's most valuable annual prize for a single work of fiction published in English, worth €100,000 to the winner or, if the book has been translated, the author receives €75,000 and the translator receives €25,000.

Unique among literary prizes, nominations are submitted by librarians and readers from a network of libraries around the world. This year’s shortlisted titles were nominated by libraries in Hungary, Switzerland, France, USA, and Canada.

The Lord Mayor of Dublin, Councillor Ray McAdam, said: *“The 2026 shortlist for the Dublin Literary Award stands as a celebration of the finest qualities of literature at its most international, most ambitious, and most humane. That four of the shortlisted works are translations is especially significant, for it speaks to the Award’s enduring belief that great writing belongs not to one nation or one language, but to the world. Representing Bosnia, Canada, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, these extraordinary books confront universal themes of grief, war, dystopian fear, unexpected friendship, and historical intrigue with brilliance, depth, and emotional power. In Dublin, a UNESCO City of Literature, we are proud to champion an Award that continues to recognise writing of the highest distinction and global significance.”*

Speaking at the announcement, City Librarian Mairead Owens remarked *“We are deeply grateful to the 80 libraries that nominated 69 titles, and to the international judging panel for the challenging work of selecting a longlist of 20 and, now the shortlist of 6 exciting and diverse titles.”*

The six member international judging panel, chaired by Professor Chris Morash, will now select the winner, which will be announced by the Patron of the Award, the Lord Mayor of Dublin Councillor Ray McAdam, on Thursday 21st May, at a gala event during Dublin City Council’s **International Literature Festival Dublin (ILFD)** which runs from the 15th to the 24th May 2026 in Merrion Square Park.

All novels nominated for the Award will be available for readers to borrow from Dublin City Libraries and from public libraries around Ireland or can be borrowed as eBooks, and some as eAudiobooks, on the free Borrowbox app, available to all public

library users. The shortlist can be viewed on the Award website at www.dublinliteraryaward.ie.

For further information contact:

Sinead O'Doherty (Macdonald) O'Doherty Communications
T: +353 86 259 1070 email: sinead@odohertycommunications.com

Dublin City Council Media Relations Office
T: 01-222 2170, +353 87 740 0277 email: press@dublincity.ie

DUBLIN Literary Award Office, Dublin City Libraries
T: +353 87 121 1699 email: literaryaward@dublincity.ie

Notes for Editors:

Dublin City Council sponsors the Dublin Literary Award, which is presented annually for a novel written in English or translated into English. Nominations are made by library systems in major cities throughout the world. Established in 1994, the Award aims to promote excellence in world literature. Designated a UNESCO City of Literature in 2010, Dublin's literary heritage is a significant driver of cultural tourism for the City.

Download a collage image of the shortlisted books [HERE](#)

Download a collage image of the shortlisted books and authors [HERE](#)

Meet the 2026 [Shortlist](#)

2026 Dublin Literary Award Judges' Citations on the shortlisted titles:

Gliff by Ali Smith

Ali Smith's *Gliff* is a book about two homeless children who befriend a horse. This seemingly modest plot, however, is the basis for a dystopian novel which will seem unsettlingly contemporary to any reader. As we follow two young siblings trying to survive a bewildering new world, there is a hum of destruction in the background. The data collection, surveillance, societal labelling and otherness are all too familiar to present-day. Like with the names of the protagonists, Briar and Rose, Smith is linguistically playful in this book, often humorous. This adds not only to the sense of

foreboding but also to the shift and loss of language in this landscape set in our near future. It is a speculative novel, but accessible to all reading tastes. It nudges the reader to reflect on the future of education, environmental destruction, family and human survival.

In Late Summer by Magdalena Blažević, translated from the Croatian by Anđelka Raguž

Magdalena Blažević's debut *In Late Summer*, which might almost be described as a poetry collection in novel form, is a powerful anti-war piece inspired by real-life events and a poignant exploration of the shattering effects of war upon its innocent victims. Set in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the early 1990s, it is a heart-wrenching story in which our 14-year-old narrator Ivana, her family and the entire rural community where they live have their existence upended by the arrival of the conflict and the terrible violence it entails. Related with incredible restraint in a deeply authentic voice, the book also offers a timeless, universal tale of country life, childhood innocence and the way that everything can be ripped apart in the blink of an eye. Thanks to the meticulously crafted translation from Croatian by Anđelka Raguž, the text's internal rhythms, silences and recurring echoes guarantee a rich, sensual reading experience which affords moments of heightened tension alongside scenes of tranquil beauty that stay with the reader long after finishing this memorable book.

Live Fast by Brigitte Giraud, translated from the French by Cory Stockwell

Brigitte Giraud's *Live Fast* is a novel that hinges around the two words that break through the surface of any act of mourning: "If only...". From the outset, we are introduced to the central premise of this highly autobiographical novel: the woman who is narrating the story is telling us how her partner was killed in a motorcycle accident. "If only it had rained." "If only I had a cell phone." The random wrong turns spiral outwards in Giraud's narrative, bringing us back to the protagonists' childhoods, their love, and their lives together up to the moment of the accident in all of their ordinary, day-to-day detail, each sudden laden with an almost overwhelming significance. For anyone who has ever experienced grief as a sense of ordinary decisions that have been over-taxed with consequence, this will be a novel with powerful resonance. Cory Stockwell's translation from French is true to Giraud's tight, succinct prose in a work of literature in which no gesture is wasted or superfluous.

Perspective(s) by Laurent Binet, translated from the French by Sam Taylor

Laurent Binet's craftily entitled *Perspective(s)* is a multi-angled novel that tells a gripping story about art and power in 16th century Florence from a number of different points of view. Its genre is not easy to pin down: at once an epistolary detective novel, an art historian's sketch book, a counterfactual history of the Renaissance social scene, it is above all a breathlessly engaging murder mystery and a sportive romp through the sometimes lurid intrigues of Florentine society under the reign of Cosimo de' Medici. The visual splendour of the narrative mirrors the credo of the time. As Binet writes: 'Because to see is to think. The viewer must deserve his painting.' Binet's prose confidently invites and sustains such scrutiny. Superbly sequenced letters among figures such as Giorgio Vasari, Cosimo de' Medici, Michelangelo, and Benvenuto Cellini afford us an intimate glimpse into the higher and lower depths of the politics, religion, art, and everyday life in the waning years of what we call the Renaissance. Filled with fun and irony, Binet affirms that the saviour of human life is faith in art and creation. Translator Sam Taylor's ear is astonishingly well attuned to Binet's tone; Anglophone readers owe much to him for enabling a full experience of this charmingly witty yet also wistful and profound story about what it means to see.

The Emperor of Gladness by Ocean Vuong

A young man perched on a bridge, determined to jump. An old woman's casual glance through the window of a house trapped in isolation. Ocean Vuong's *The Emperor of Gladness* is a story of human intersections, and the extraordinary beauty it hides. Fragile characters, in introspective prose, light a surreal lamp in the reader's imagination, softly rendering eternal truths about the redemptive power of love, even when held in the hands of the deeply flawed. Hai and Grazina, Vietnamese and Lithuanian, one a recovering addict, the other burdened with dementia and the stubborn memories of a War the teenager cannot know, form the narrative heart of a tale set in East Gladness, Connecticut. It is a tale that shines in spite – or, may be, because – of the bleakness of its setting. A delicate web of plots and subplots woven together masterfully by Ocean Vuong.

What I Know About You by Éric Chacour, translated from the French by Pablo Strauss

What I Know About You by Éric Chacour is a gem of a novel, set within the Levantine Christian community in Cairo and in multi-cultural Montreal. The book's shaping idea is that 'none of us is ever wholly what society expects us to be.' It explores themes of family, identity, conformity and sexuality through the story of Tarek, a doctor from a

prominent family, and his singular relationship with Ali. Their intense affair, which is sensitively explored, crosses boundaries of class, community and religion, and shatters sexual taboos. It upends Tarek's comfortable existence. The story uses different angles through which to reveal itself – You, Me and Us, fusing the experience of Tarek and his son, Rafik. This is Éric Chacour's debut novel which shows him to be a master storyteller with an impressive emotional feel. The novel's characters, with their unfamiliar backgrounds, are easy to identify with while the prose, in a translation from French by Pablo Strauss, is consistently exceptional. This engaging saga stretching from the 1960s to the early 2000s unfolds with grace and power. It packs a lot into its 220 highly-readable pages.

Previous DUBLIN Literary Award winners:

- 2025: *The Adversary*** by Michael Crummey (Canadian)
- 2024: *Solenoid*** by Mircea Cărtărescu (Romanian), translated by Sean Cotter
- 2023: *Marzahn, Mon Amour*** by Katja Oskamp (German), translated by Jo Heinrich
- 2022: *The Art of Losing*** by Alice Zeniter (French), translated by Frank Wynne
- 2021: *Lost Children Archive*** by Valeria Luiselli (Mexican)
- 2020: *Milkman*** by Anna Burns (Irish)
- 2019: *Idaho*** by Emily Ruskovich (American)
- 2018: *Solar Bones*** by Mike McCormack (Irish)
- 2017: *A General Theory of Oblivion*** by José Eduardo Agualusa (Angolan), translated by Daniel Hahn
- 2016: *Family Life*** by Akhil Sharma (American)
- 2015: *Harvest*** by Jim Crace (British)
- 2014: *The Sound of Things Falling*** by Juan Gabriel Vásquez (Colombian), translated by Anne McLean
- 2013: *City of Bohane*** by Kevin Barry (Irish)
- 2012: *Even the Dogs*** by Jon McGregor (British)
- 2011: *Let the Great World Spin* by Colum McCann (Irish)
- 2010: *The Twin*** by Gerbrand Bakker (Dutch), translated by David Colmer
- 2009: *Man Gone Down*** by Michael Thomas (American)
- 2008: *De Niro's Game*** by Rawi Hage (Lebanese / Canadian)
- 2007: *Out Stealing Horses*** by Per Petterson (Norwegian), translated by Anne Born
- 2006: *The Master*** by Colm Toibín (Irish)
- 2005: *The Known World*** by Edward P. Jones (American)
- 2004: *This Blinding Absence of Light*** by Tahar Ben Jelloun (Moroccan) translated by Linda Coverdale
- 2003: *My Name is Red*** by Orhan Pamuk (Turkish) translated by Erdag M. Göknar
- 2002: *Atomised*** by Michel Houellebecq (French), translated by Frank Wynne
- 2001: *No Great Mischief*** by Alistair MacLeod (Canadian)

2000: *Wide Open* by Nicola Barker (English)

1999: *Ingenious Pain* by Andrew Miller (English)

1998: *The Land of Green Plums* by Herta Müller (Romanian), translated from German by Michael Hofmann

1997: *A Heart So White* by Javier Marías (Spanish), translated by Margaret Jull Costa

1996: *Remembering Babylon* by David Malouf (Australian)

Ends.