

Announcing the Finalists for the National Book Critics Circle Awards

January 22, 2012 By [Barbara Hoffert](#)

Big-name authors like Jeffrey Eugenides and Alan Hollinghurst, plus show-stopping newcomer Teju Cole (*Open City*). Three books treating war: Adam Hochschild's *To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914-1918*, Maya Jasanoff's *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary War*, and Amanda Foreman's *A World on Fire: Britain's Crucial Role in the American Civil War*.

Giant biographies on giants like Malcolm X, George F. Kennan, and Karl Marx. Autobiography often investigating intimate tragedy, like Diane Ackerman's *One Hundred Names for Love: A Stroke, A Marriage, and the Language of Healing* and Mira Bartók's *The Memory Palace*.

Criticism that captures works by old hands like Geoff Dyer and Joanthan Lethem, plus Ellen Willis's much-anticipated posthumous *Out of the Vinyl Deeps: Ellen Willis on Rock Music*. Old hands in poetry, too, like Laura Kasischke (*Space, in Chains*) and Yusef Komunyakaa (*The Chameleon Couch*), plus promising upstart Aracelis Girmay (*Kingdom Animalia*).

These are some of the finalists for the National Book Critics Circle Awards, announced at a gala event in the wide-open Artists Space in downtown Manhattan, not far from *LJ*'s offices. The morning snow and afternoon slush didn't dim spirits one bit. Also announced: Robert Silvers, longtime editor of the *New York Review of Books*, won the Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award, and Kathryn Schulz won the Nona Balakian Citation for Excellence in Reviewing.

Winners of the book awards will be announced Thursday, March 8, at 6:00 p.m. at the New School's Tishman Auditorium in New York. But first, here is a complete list of finalists.

Fiction

Teju Cole, *Open City* (Random House)

Jeffrey Eugenides, *The Marriage Plot* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

Alan Hollinghurst, *The Stranger's Child* (Knopf)

Edith Pearlman, *Binocular Vision* (Lookout Books)
Dana Spiotta, *Stone Arabia* (Scribner)

Nonfiction

Amanda Foreman, *A World on Fire: Britain's Crucial Role in the American Civil War* (Random)
James Gleick, *The Information* (Pantheon)
Adam Hochschild, *To End All Wars: A Story of Loyalty and Rebellion, 1914-1918* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)
Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary War* (Knopf)
John Jeremiah Sullivan, *Pulphed: Essays* (Farrar, Straus, & Giroux)

Autobiography

Diane Ackerman, *One Hundred Names for Love: A Stroke, A Marriage, and the Language of Healing* (W.W. Norton)
Mira Bartók, *The Memory Palace* (Free Press)
Sharifa Rhodes-Pitts, *Harlem Is Nowhere: A Journey to the Mecca of Black America* (Little, Brown)
Luis J. Rodríguez, *It Calls You Back: An Odyssey Through Love, Addiction, Revolutions, and Healing* (Touchstone)
Deb Olin Unferth, *Revolution: The Year I Fell in Love and Went to Join the War* (Henry Holt)

Biography

Mary Gabriel, *Love and Capital: Karl and Jenny Marx and the Birth of the Revolution* (Little, Brown)
John Lewis Gaddis, *George F. Kennan: An American Life* (Penguin Press)
Paul Hendrickson, *Hemingway's Boat: Everything He Loved in Life, and Lost, 1934-1961* (Knopf)
Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention* (Viking)
Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Belknap Press: Harvard University Press)

Criticism

David Bellos, *Is That a Fish in Your Ear?: Translation and the Meaning of Everything* (Faber & Faber)
Geoff Dyer, *Otherwise Known as the Human Condition: Selected Essays and Reviews* (Graywolf)
Jonathan Lethem, *The Ecstasy of Influence* (Doubleday)
Dubravka Ugresic, *Karaoke Culture* (Open Letter)
Ellen Willis, *Out of the Vinyl Deeps: Ellen Willis on Rock Music* (University of Minnesota Press)

Poetry

Forrest Gander, *Core Samples from the World* (New Directions)
Aracelis Girmay, *Kingdom Animalia* (BOA Editions)

Laura Kasischke, *Space, in Chains* (Copper Canyon Press)
Yusef Komunyakaa, *The Chameleon Couch* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux)
Bruce Smith, *Devotions* (University of Chicago Press)