MASSACHUSETTS BOOK AWARDS “MUST READS” ANNOUNCED
Long-listed Books for the 23rd Annual Awards Unveiled

Northampton, Massachusetts, 8 May 2023 – Massachusetts Center for the Book (MCB) has announced the “Must Read” (long-listed) titles in the 23rd Annual Massachusetts Book Awards program. The titles represent achievements in fiction, nonfiction, poetry and young people’s literature by Massachusetts writers and illustrators during 2022.

The longlists were released Monday, May 8th, at the 2023 Massachusetts Library Association Conference in Falmouth. “Since its inauguration in 2001, the ‘MassBooks’ have become one of the largest state awards programs in the country,” observed Sharon Shaloo, MCB Executive Director. “It’s an annual reminder of the talent and diversity of the many writers who live and work in the Commonwealth, fueling our well-deserved reputation as a literature-rich and book-centric place.”

In her first year as Program Coordinator, Karolina Zapal was impressed by the robust submissions in all genres. “Longlists will be promoted throughout the summer,” noted Zapal. “Awards will then be announced in late summer in the five Must Read categories. We’ll also announce a prize in the new Translated Literature category, and we look forward to celebrating at a State House ceremony in the fall.”

Must-Read Fiction:
Atomic Anna by Rachel Barenbaum; The Beckoning World by Douglas Bauer; Horse by Geraldine Brooks; How to Fall Out of Love Madly by Jana Casale; The Miraculous True History of Nomi Ali by Uzma Aslam Khan; Our Missing Hearts by Celeste Ng; Pictures of the Shark by Thomas H. McNeely; Shadows of Berlin by David R. Gillham; Thank You, Mr. Nixon by Gish Jen; Tides by Sara Freeman; Tracy Flick Can’t Win by Tom Perrotta; Vigil Harbor by Julia Glass

Must-Read Nonfiction:
By Hands Now Known by Margaret A. Burnham; Civil Rights Queen by Tomiko Brown-Nagin; How to Raise an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi; The Imposter’s War by Mark Arsenault; Rebels at Sea by Eric Jay Dolin; Six Walks: In the Footsteps of Henry David Thoreau by Ben Shattuck; Teaching White Supremacy by Donald Yacovone; The Third Person by Emma Grove; This is What It Sounds Like by Susan Rogers and Ogi Ogas; Ways and Means by Roger Lowenstein; We Refuse to Forget by Caleb Gayle; Winslow Homer: American Passage by William R. Cross

Must-Read Poetry:
American Treasure by Jill McDonough; Headstone by Mark Elber; Hyperphantasia by Sara Deniz Akant; Let the
World Have You by Mikko Harvey; On the Mercy Me Planet by Maya Janson; Previously Owned by Nathan McClain; The Queen of Queens by Jennifer Martelli; Sleeping in the Dead Girl’s Room by Cynthia Bargar; Star Lake by Arda Collins; The Study of Human Life by Joshua Bennett; We are Mermaids by Stephanie Burt; The World Keeps Ending, and the World Goes On by Franny Choi

Must-Read Middle Grade/Young Adult Literature:

Cress Watercress by Gregory Maguire; A Dragon Used to Live Here by Annette LeBlanc Cate; Gold Mountain by Betty G. Yee; Healer & Witch by Nancy Werlin; Hidden Powers by Jeannine Atkins; The Moth Girl by Heather Kamins; Myracles in the Void by Wes Dyson; No Filter and Other Lies by Crystal Maldonado; The Polter-Ghost Problem by Betsy Uhrig; A Scatter of Light by Malinda Lo; Slip by Marika McCoola; Trouble at Turtle Pond by Diana Renn

Must-Read Picture Books/Early Readers:

Diving Deep: Using Machines to Explore the Ocean by Michelle Cusolito and illustrated by Nicole Wong; Good Night, Little Bookstore by Amy Cherrix and illustrated by E.B. Goodale; Hope is an Arrow by Cory McCarthy and illustrated by Ekua Holmes; I’ll Go and Come Back by Rajani LaRoca; Lulu and Zoey by Carrie Finison; My Pet Feet by Josh Funk; Sanctuary: Kip Tiernan and Rosie’s Place, the Nation’s First Shelter for Women by Christine McDonnell; Show and Tell! Great Graphs and Smart Charts by Stuart J. Murphy; Sunday Pancakes by Maya Tatsukawa; Twinkle, Twinkle, Winter Night by Megan Litwin; Whose Nest is Best? by Heidi E. Y. Stemple; Wombat Said Come In by Carmen Agra Deedy and illustrated by Brian Lies

Judges for the 23rd Annual Awards are Karen Ball (Wilbraham Public Library); Jennifer Bruneau (Northborough Free Library); Devon Evans (Brewster Ladies’ Library); Brett French (CWMARS Worcester); Kelly Gates (Somerville Public Library); Jennifer Jones (Mattapoisett Free Public Library); Dory Klein (Boston Public Library); Melissa MacLeod (Carver Public Library); Tegan Mannino (Clapp Memorial Library, Belchertown); Alene Moroni (Forbes Library, Northampton); Sara Rottger (Wilmington Memorial Library); Emily Souza (Rockport Public Library); Melanie Terrill (West Bridgewater Public Library); Jennifer Usovicz (Peabody Institute Library, Peabody); Lexi Wright (High Five Books, Florence); and staff/consultants of Massachusetts Center for the Book.

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