

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE SEAMUS HEANEY CENTRE FOR POETRY  
PRIZE FOR FIRST FULL COLLECTION 2016  
Supported by Glucksman Ireland House,  
New York University**

The Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry at Queen's University, Belfast, is delighted to announce the winner of the seventh Prize for First Full Collection.

The Prize is awarded annually to the writer of the best first collection published in the UK or Ireland in the preceding year and is awarded with support from Glucksman Ireland House at New York University. Glucksman Ireland House, the Center for Irish and Irish-American Studies at NYU supports the award through generous funding in honour of Thomas Quinlan, a third generation Irish-American teacher and educator.

The Prize will be awarded on Thursday, 30 June, during the Seamus Heaney Centre Poetry Summer School, at No Alibis Bookshop, Botanic Avenue, Belfast.

**The winner of this year's Prize is  
KATE MILLER  
for her book  
*The Observances*  
(Carcenet)**

The winner receives a cheque for £5,000. In addition they are invited to read at Glucksman Ireland House at New York University for the annual Tom Quinlan Lecture in Poetry, provided with travel, accommodation, and an honorarium. The lecture takes place in the autumn 2016.

The Chair of the judges this year was Dr Leontia Flynn, alongside Dr Paul Batchelor and Dr Caitriona O'Reilly. Leontia Flynn said "This was a strong shortlist of first poetry collections, each with a very distinctive style, project and outlook. Ultimately, the judges decided unanimously on a book where the quiet but intense sensibility of the author is integral to her poetic endeavour."

Of the winner the judges said, "*The Observances*' is an ambitious and unusual debut, with an assurance and an authority that poets

*Int é n bec  
ro lé c feit  
do rinn guíp  
glanbuidi*

*fo-ceird faid  
ós Loch Laíg,  
lon do chraí b  
charnbuidi*

9<sup>th</sup> century Irish

*The small bird  
chirp-chirruped:  
yellow neb,  
a note-spurt.*

*Blackbird over  
Lagan water  
Clumps of yellow  
whin-burst!*

Seamus Heaney

*the little bird  
that whistled shrill  
from the nib of  
its yellow bill:*

*a note let go  
o'er Belfast Lough –  
a blackbird from  
a yellow whin*

Ciaran Carson

more often find (if they find it at all) later in their careers. But there is nothing 'settled' here in the pejorative sense of that word: in fact the poems are often on the move, traveling through experience, tracing the processes by which life comes into being and passes away, eyes open for the illuminating image, ears attuned to subtleties of tone and register. Maturity can be manifested in many ways, and here it means the confidence to take risks deliberately — the risks necessary to let the world in." (Paul Batchelor) "These poems dramatize the movement of consciousness in a way might be described as phenomenological – Miller is a frank enough, and an assured enough poet, to rely on her apprehensions and she does so in language of great fidelity and freshness. The resonance of its title, 'The Observances', hints at the many levels on which this collection satisfies." (Caitriona O'Reilly)

The Seamus Heaney Centre Poetry Prize for First Full Collection was inaugurated to celebrate the work of the Heaney Centre, and to honour its founding poet. The Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry is a focal point for creativity in Ireland and is recognised as an international centre of creative and research excellence in the field of literature. Central to the Centre's ethos is the encouragement of emerging talent.

The shortlisted runners-up were:

Jim Carruth, *Killochries*, (Freight Books)

John Dennison, *Otherwise*, (Carcenet)

Sarah Howe, *Loop of Jade*, (Chatto & Windus)

Rebecca Perry, *Beauty/Beauty*, (Bloodaxe Books)

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