

Scottish Book Trust Announces Recipient of Next Chapter Award 2020

A poet from Orkney has been announced as the recipient of Scottish Book Trust's Next Chapter Award 2020. Olive M. Ritch now lives and works in Aberdeen and her poetry has been published in literary magazines and anthologies, including *Poetry Review*, *The Guardian*, *Gutter*, *New Writing Scotland*, and *In Protest: 150 Poems for Human Rights* (University of London).

Previous winners of the award include Gail Honeyman, bestseller author of *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*, who recently received the Platinum Award (for sales exceeding 1 million) at Nielsen's annual Bestseller Awards.

The Next Chapter Award is run by Scottish Book Trust, the national charity transforming lives through reading and writing. The prize is aimed at writers aged over 40 who wish to develop a specific piece of work to publication standard, and applicants must demonstrate genuine potential for publication.

Olive M. Ritch is an Honorary Research Fellow at the Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies, University of Aberdeen, where she taught English Literature and Creative Writing until 2016. She was also a Scots Language Ambassador at Stromness Primary School from 2015 - 2016. She is now a freelance creative writing tutor.

Ritch's poetry reflects her experience as a social worker in Aberdeen and Orkney, especially in regards to her focus on illness, loss and the abuse of power. Her poems examine not only the sick body, but also the sick mind and the sick society. There are also poems that evoke the simplicity and struggles of Orkney life through her blending of the Orkney Language with Standard English. It is her ambition to publish a collection of poetry.

The Next Chapter Award will provide Olive with a £2000 bursary, nine months of mentoring and two weeks on retreat at creative writing centre Moniack Mhor, with the aim of developing her collection to publication standard.

Commenting on the award, Olive Ritch said:

"I'm delighted to receive the Next Chapter Award and am extremely grateful to Scottish Book Trust for selecting me for this wonderful opportunity. There is much to look forward to in the 'next chapter' of my writing life."

Marc Lambert, CEO of Scottish Book Trust, said:

“Congratulations to Olive Ritch on her Next Chapter Award. We’re delighted to provide the time and support for aspiring writers who otherwise may not have the opportunity to further their work. We look forward to reading more of Olive's moving poetry in the future.”

A poem by Olive Ritch:

In Memory of Anne Naysmith

Anne Naysmith, concert pianist, won a place
at the Royal Academy of Music, and was praised
for the ‘rich warmth’ of her Rachmaninov,
but after the piano-playing stopped, what do we know of Anne
Naysmith pacing the streets of Chiswick in rags
stitched to rags for three decades?

Who was she?

Did she still dream Beethoven,
Bach, Debussy? What drummed
in her head at night? Did she dread
morning light on the rubbled muddle
in her makeshift home at the foot of a London underground embankment?
It’s too late – late too late – Anne Naysmith was killed
by a lorry on tenth February, twenty-fifteen
at the age of seventy-seven. People talk
of choice. Did she choose
this life? Who knows
the what or the why, only that something happened
and she turned her back on Wigmore Hall.

Ends

**For all media enquiries, please contact PR & Marketing Manager Keara Donnachie:
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Notes to Editors

Scottish Book Trust

Scottish Book Trust is a national charity changing lives through reading and writing. We inspire and support the people of Scotland to read and write for pleasure through programmes and outreach work that include:

- Gifting books to every child in Scotland to ensure families of all backgrounds can share the joy of books at home.



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- Working with teachers to inspire children to develop a love of reading, creating innovative classroom activities, book awards and author events.
- Supporting Scotland's diverse writing community with our training, awards and writing opportunities.
- Funding a range of author events for the public to enjoy and promoting Scottish writing to people worldwide.

In addition to the funding we receive from the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland, we need the constant support of trusts and foundations, corporate sponsors and individual donors.

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Creative Scotland

In addition to general fundraising, Scottish Book Trust receives Creative Scotland support through Regular Funding. Creative Scotland is the public body that supports the arts, screen and creative industries across all parts of Scotland on behalf of everyone who lives, works or visits here. We enable people and organisations to work in and experience the arts, screen and creative industries in Scotland by helping others to develop great ideas and bring them to life. We distribute funding provided by the Scottish Government and the National Lottery. For further information about Creative Scotland please visit www.creativescotland.com. Follow us @creativescots and www.facebook.com/CreativeScotland