

# Caine Prize 2012 awarded to Rotimi Babatunde

Described as Africa's leading literary award, the 2012 Caine Prize for African Writing has been awarded to Nigerian Rotimi Babatunde for his short story entitled *Bombay's Republic* published in the *Mirabilia Review*.



Rotimi Babatunde

Chair of the [judging panel](#), Bernardine Evaristo announced Babatunde as the winner of the £10 000 prize at an awards dinner held on the evening of Monday, 2 July 2012, at the Bodleian Library at the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom.

Evaristo said, "*Bombay's Republic* vividly describes the story of a Nigerian soldier fighting in the Burma campaign of World War Two. It is ambitious, darkly humorous and in soaring, scorching prose exposes the exploitative nature of the colonial project and the psychology of independence."

Babatunde's fiction and poems have been published in Africa, Europe and America in journals which include *Die Aussenseite des Elementes* and Fiction on the Web and in anthologies. He is a winner of the Meridian Tragic Love Story Competition organised by the BBC World Service and his plays have been staged and presented by institutions which include the Halcyon Theatre, Chicago and the Institute for Contemporary Arts. He is currently taking part in a collaboratively produced piece at the Royal Court and the Young Vic as part of World Stages for a World City. Rotimi lives in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Also shortlisted were:

- Billy Kahora from Kenya for *Urban Zoning*
- Stanley Kenani from Malawi for *Love on Trial*
- Melissa Tandiwe Myambo from Zimbabwe for *La Salle de Départ*
- Constance Myburgh from South Africa for *Hunter Emmanuel*

Alongside Evaristo on the panel of judges this year included cultural journalist, Maya Jaggi; Zimbabwean poet, songwriter and writer Chirikure Chirikure; associate professor at Georgetown University, Washington DC, Samantha Pinto; and the Sudanese CNN television correspondent, Nima Elbagir.

As the winner, Babatunde will be given the opportunity of taking up a month's residence at Georgetown University, as a writer-in-residence at the Lannan Center for Poetics and Social Practice. The award covers all travel and living expenses and will also be invited to take part in the Open Book Festival in Cape Town in September 2012 and events hosted by the Museum of African Art in New York in November 2012.

## **Previous winners**

Last years' winner, Zimbabwean writer NoViolet Bulawayo has subsequently been awarded the highly regarded two-year Stegner Writing Fellowship at Stanford University, in the United States.

Previous winners are Sudan's Leila Aboulela (2000), Nigerian Helon Habila (2001), Kenyan Binyavanga Wainaina (2002), Kenyan Yvonne Owuor (2003), Zimbabwean Brian Chikwava (2004), Nigerian Segun Afolabi (2005), South African Mary Watson (2006), Ugandan Monica Arac de Nyeko (2007), South African Henrietta Rose-Innes (2008), Nigerian EC Osondu (2009) and Sierra Leonean Olufemi Terry (2010).

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