

Costa Short Story Award 2013: Writers' Identities Revealed

- **Two writers shortlisted last year nominated again**
 - **Submissions were judged anonymously**
 - **Over 1400 entries received**
- **Winner decided by public vote and will be announced at the Costa Book Awards ceremony on 28th January**

London, 21st January 2014: Costa Coffee today announces the identities of the six finalists shortlisted for the 2013 Costa Short Story Award. Remarkably, given that the competition was judged anonymously (ie without the identities of the authors being known) and with over 1400 entries received this year, it can be revealed that two of this year's final six writers were also shortlisted last year.

Established in 2012, the Award – run in association with the Costa Book Awards but judged independently of the main five-category system – is unique in that it was judged anonymously ie without the name of the author being known throughout the process. It is open to both published and unpublished writers, for a single, previously unpublished short story of up to 4,000 words by an author aged 18 years or over and written in English.

The shortlist of six stories was selected by a panel of judges – Richard Beard, Fanny Blake, Victoria Hislop and Simon Trewin – and then made available on the Costa Book Awards website for the public to download and read, and then vote for their favourite.

Voting has now closed and Costa is today revealing the names of the six authors shortlisted for the new Award, four of them published and two of them currently unpublished. Between them, they have been shortlisted for many other short story competitions, including the BBC National Short Story Award, the Bridport Prize, the Bristol Prize and the Sunday Times EFG Short Story Award.

The six shortlisted authors are Tony Bagley, Clare Chandler, Sheila Llewellyn, Angela Readman, Erin Soros and Kit de Waal.

Tony Bagley for *The Forgiveness Thing*: Tony Bagley has worked as a journalist, freelance copy editor and script reader and editor for Central Television. His writing has won him many awards including the Giles Cooper Award, a New London Radio Playwrights Award and he was the Grand Prix winner of the PAWS Drama Award (1999). He has written many plays for radio and his comedy series writing includes *The Older Woman*, starring Martin Clunes and Zoe Wanamaker, and *Married* with Hugh Bonneville and Josie Lawrence, both broadcast on Radio 4. He also penned a black comedy for television, *The Last Word*, which was broadcast on BBC2 in 1996. He lives in Sussex.

Clare Chandler for *The Gun Shearer*: Clare Chandler has worked in education, publishing and government publicity. She has written many non-fiction books and articles, had plays performed on the Edinburgh Fringe and co-founded Bookgroup Info, the independent website for reading groups. Since completing the MA in Creative Writing at Exeter University in 2012, she has been concentrating on writing fiction and is presently completing the final draft of a novel. She lives in Cornwall.

Sheila Llewellyn for *The Papakh Hat*: Sheila had two careers before turning to creative writing – firstly working for the British Council in Iran, Africa and Singapore, before retraining as a psychologist specialising in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Sheila was shortlisted for the inaugural Costa Short Story Award in 2012, and in the same year, was shortlisted for the Bridport Short Story Prize, the Sean O’Faolain Prize and the Fish Memoir Prize. In 2011, her radio play *The House on Shareni Street* won the PJ O’ Connor Radio Drama Award. Sheila lives in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland and is currently completing a PhD in Creative Writing at Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry and writing her first novel.

Angela Readman for *The Keeper of the Jackalopes*: Angela Readman’s stories have been shortlisted in the Costa Short Story Award (2012), The Asham Award and The Bristol Prize. Her work has been published on line and some of her stories have recently appeared in the anthologies *Once Upon a Time There was a Traveller* (Virago), *Root* (Iron Press) and *Unthology 3* (Unthanks.) She is currently working on a short story collection, *Don’t Try This at Home*. She lives in Newcastle, has an MA in Creative Writing and also writes poetry. Her poetry has been a winner of The Essex Poetry Prize, and in 2013 she won The Mslexia Poetry Competition.

Erin Soros for *Still Water, BC*: Erin Soros has published fiction and non-fiction in international periodicals and anthologies. Her stories have been produced for CBC radio and BBC radio as recipients of Canada’s CBC Literary Award and the Commonwealth Prize for the Short Story. She was a finalist for the BBC National Short Story Award and longlisted for the Sunday Times EFG Short Story Award. Originally trained in the theatre, Erin Soros was a professional puppeteer. She then worked for ten years as a rape crisis counselor and as a coordinator of literacy programs for at-risk youth. She moved to Norwich in 2007 to accept a position as the Charles Pick Fellow at the University of East Anglia, where she stayed to pursue a PhD in Creative and Critical Writing. A collection of stories and photographs, *Morning is Vertical*, is forthcoming from Rufus Books.

Kit de Waal for *The Old Man and The Suit*: Kit de Waal worked in criminal and family law for fifteen years and now writes flash fiction, short stories and longer form prose. She is published in various anthologies – *Fish Prize* 2011 & 2012; *The Sea in Birmingham* 2013; *Final Chapters* 2013 – and works as an editor of non-fiction. She is represented by Jenny Hewson of Rogers, Coleridge & White and is currently working on a novel, *The Scarlet Emperor*.

The story that received the most public votes will be announced as winner and receive £3,500 at next week’s Costa Book Awards ceremony, with second place receiving £1,500 and third place £500.

The inaugural winner of the Costa Short Story Award in 2012 was former prison manager now full-time writer, Avril Joy, from Witton-le-Wear in Bishop Auckland whose winning story, *Millie and Bird*, was included in an anthology of short stories compiled by Victoria Hislop called *The Story: Love Loss and the Lives of Women - 100 Great Short Stories* (published by Head of Zeus).

The Costa Book Awards recognise the most enjoyable books of the last year by writers based in the UK and Ireland. Formerly known as the Whitbread Book Awards, Costa announced its takeover of the sponsorship of the UK's prestigious and popular book prize in 2006.

www.costabookawards.com

For more information:

For further press information, to arrange an interview with any of the Costa Short Story Award finalists please contact Amanda Johnson on 07715 922 180 or email amanda@amandajohnsonpr.com.

Notes for Editors:

About the Costa Short Story Award:

- The Costa Short Story Award was launched in 2012.
- The Costa Short Story Award is for a single, previously unpublished short story of up to 4,000 words by an author aged 18 years or over and written in English.
- The author's primary residence must have been the UK or Ireland for the past three years.
- The Award runs in association with the Costa Book Awards but is judged independently of the main five-category system
- Entrants need not have been previously published but publishers and agents may submit entries on behalf of authors.

About the Costa Book Awards:

- The Costa Book Awards, formerly the Whitbread Book Awards, were established in 1971 to encourage, promote and celebrate the best contemporary British writing.
- The total prize fund for the Costa Book Awards – including the Costa Short Story Award - stands at £60,000.
- The award winners from the five categories - Novel, First Novel, Biography, Poetry and Children's Book - each receive £5,000.
- The overall Costa Book of the Year is selected from the five Category Award Winners with the winner receiving a further £30,000.
- The winner will be announced at an awards ceremony in central London on 28th January, 2014.
- To be eligible for the 2013 awards, books must have been first published in the UK or Ireland between 1 November 2012 and 31 October 2013.
- The 2012 Costa Book of the Year was *Bring Up the Bodies* by Hilary Mantel (Fourth Estate).

About Costa

Costa is the UK's favourite coffee shop, having been awarded "Best Branded Coffee Shop Chain in the UK and Ireland" by Allegra Strategies for four years running (2010, 2011, 2012 & November 2013). Winner of "Best Branded Coffee Chain in Europe" Allegra Strategies 2011, 2012 and 2013.

With over 1,600 coffee shops in the UK and more than 1,000 overseas, Costa is the fastest-growing coffee shop business in the UK and the second largest coffee shop operator in the world. Founded in London by Italian brothers Sergio and Bruno Costa in 1971, Costa has become the UK's favourite coffee shop chain and has recently diversified into both the at-home and gourmet self-serve markets. Costa employs over 11,000 people and is creating around 1,500 jobs this year and over 4,500 jobs in the next 3 years in the UK.

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Costa is committed to looking after coffee-growers. That's why we've established The Costa Foundation, a registered charity. The Costa Foundation's aims are to relieve poverty, advance education and the health and environment of coffee-growing communities around the world. So far, The Costa Foundation has funded the building of 42 schools and improved the social and economic welfare of coffee-growing communities.

