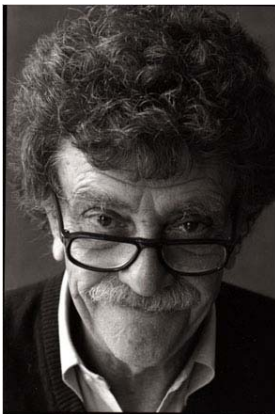


OBITUARIES

2007 has been a year of particular loss for Literature

One of the most significant figures who has said goodbye this year is the American writer **Kurt Vonnegut** (84). Although he wrote plays, essays



and short fiction, his 14 novels became classics of the American counterculture, making him a literary idol, particularly to students in the 1960s and 1970s. Like Mark Twain, he used humour and pessimism to tackle questions about

human existence. Apart from his metaphysical issues, he used a blend of science fiction, philosophy and jokes to write about the banalities of consumer culture or the destruction of the environment.

Another writer who has left us is the feminist icon born in Nebraska, **Tillie Olsen** (94). She produced a small but substantial body of work, including short stories, books and essays that dealt with women's and working-class people's



struggles. The title story of her first published book, *Tell Me a Riddle* (1961), was made into a film in 1980. Olsen returned to issues of feminism and social struggle throughout her work, publishing a nonfiction book,

Silences (1978), an examination of the impediments that writers face because of sex, race or social class. Since the early 1970s, she was an adviser to the Feminist Press.

2007 has also seen the loss of prominent worldwide figures in different cultural fields: **Benazir Bhutto**, the Prime Minister of Pakistan (54); **Luciano Pavarotti**, the internationally acclaimed opera tenor (71); **Boris Yeltsin**, Russian President (76); **Jack Zander**, American animator, better known for *Tom and Jerry* (99); and Spanish actor **Fernando Fernán Gómez** (86).

Sources

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/12/books/12vonnegut.html>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/03/books/03olsen.html>

SUCCESSSES

1. The nobel prize in literature



Doris Lessing (88) is a Persian-born novelist, raised in Rhodesia and currently residing in London. Her writing is thoroughly autobiographical and reflects her engagement with the social and political issues of her time. To justify Lessing's Nobel Prize Award 2007, The Swedish Academy described her as *“that epicist of the female experience, who with skepticism, fire and visionary power has subjected a divided civilization to scrutiny”*. The award is worth \$1.6 million.

Lessing never completed high school and educated herself through reading. She has written numerous books of fiction, as well as plays, nonfiction and two volumes of autobiography. She is the 11th woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

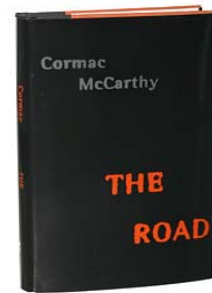
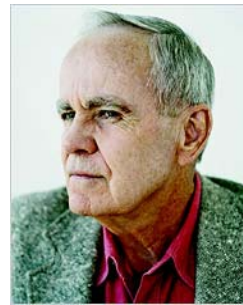
Lessing's inspiration for a generation of feminists with her novel *The Golden Notebook* is one of her greatest achievements. The Swedish Academy said *“The burgeoning feminist movement saw it as a pioneering work, and it belongs to the handful of books that informed the 20th-century view of the male-female relationship”*. However, despite having been acclaimed as an early heroine of feminism, Lessing refused being one.

Sources

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/11/world/11cnd-nobel.html>

http://www.biografiasyvidas.com/biografia/1/lessing_doris.htm

2. The pulitzer prize for fiction



2007 has been the Pulitzer year for Cormac McCarthy and his novel *The Road* (Knopf). It is a post-apocalyptic story about the journey of a father and his son after a cataclysm that destroyed civilization. The prize is worth ten thousand dollars and is awarded for distinguished fiction by an American author, preferably dealing with American life.

Cormac McCarthy was born in Rhode Island in 1933 and writes fiction and drama. He has written ten novels in the western, post-apocalyptic and Southern Gothic genres. His 2005 novel *No Country for Old Men* was made into a movie in 2007, winning four Academy Awards. Literary critic Harold Bloom considered him one of the four major American novelists of his time, along with Thomas Pynchon, Philip Roth and Don DeLillo. He has been frequently compared to Faulkner.

Also nominated as finalists in this category were *After This* by Alice McDermott (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), and *The Echo Maker* by Richard Powers (Farrar, Straus and Giroux).

The winners in the rest of the categories within the *Letters, Drama and Music Awards* are: *Rabbit Hole* by David Lindsay-Abaire (Drama), *The Race Beat* by Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff (History), *The Most Famous Man in America* by Debby Applegate (Biography), *Native Guard* by Natasha Trethewey (Poetry), *The Looming Tower* by Lawrence Wright (General non-fiction), and *Sound Grammar* by Ornette Coleman (Music).

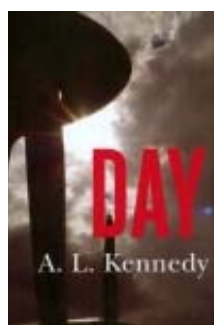
Sources

<http://www.pulitzer.org/citation/2007-Fiction>
http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cormac_McCarthy
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/09/25/books/25masl.html>

3. Costa Book Awards (the former Whitbread prize)

The Whitbread prize, originally established in 1971 by Whitbread Plc., is since 2006 known as Costa Book Awards. Costa, the UK's fastest-growing coffee shop chain, announced its takeover of the sponsorship of the UK's most prestigious book prize in 2006, the year both Costa and the Book Awards celebrated their 35th anniversary.

The 2007 Book of the Year was won by the winner of the **novel category**: Scottish writer A. L. Kennedy for *Day* (Knopf). It is the eighth time that a novel takes the overall prize. The novelist was compared to James Joyce by one of the judges. Kennedy's fifth novel is a post-second world war novel that she describes as realist but not gloomy – in contrast to the opinion of some critics.

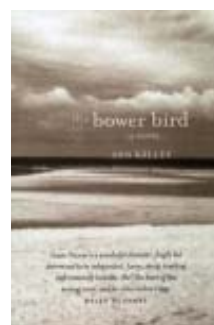


Katherine O'Flynn was second favourite to win the prize under the **first novel category** with *What*

Was Lost (Tindal Street). O'Flynn's book is a detective story combined with elements of ghost and mystery tales and a satirical look at the life of a shopping centre.



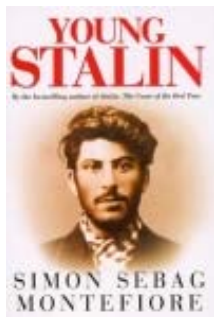
In the **children's** category, Ann Kelley won with *The Bower Bird* (Luath). Although the synopsis looks a pessimistic, since it is the story of a twelve-year old girl suffering from a congenital heart condition from which she will die unless she undergoes major surgery, the book is bright and amusing. It is the sequel of Kelley's 2005 debut *The Burying Beetle*. Books for the category should be for children aged between 8 and 14.



Jean Sprackland won the prize in the **poetry** category with *Tilt* (Jonathan Cape). The collection, her third, explores the transience of familial and more general human relations but also encompasses environmental issues. In 2004 Jean Sprackland was named by the Poetry Book Society as one of the 'Next Generation' poets.



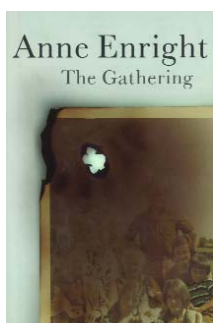
The winner of the **biography** category was Simon Sebag Montefiore's *Young Stalin* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson), a psychological portrait of this dangerous figure in the making.



Source

http://www.costabookawards.co.uk/awards/category_winners.aspx

4. The man Booker prize for fiction 2007



Anne Enright has won the Man Booker Prize for Fiction 2007 for her novel *The Gathering*, published by Jonathan Cape. The Dublin-born writer studied creative writing under Malcolm Bradbury and Angela Carter at the University of East Anglia and has worked for six years as a TV producer and director in Ireland. She has published one collection of stories, *The Portable Virgin*, and three previous novels, *The Wig My Father Wore*, *What Are You Like?* and *The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch*. *What Are You Like?* was shortlisted for the Whitbread Novel Award and won the Encore Award. Her first work of non-fiction, *Making Babies: Stumbling into Motherhood*, was published in 2004. Like Desai's novel (Man Booker Prize 2006), Enright's *The Gathering* is a family epic and a sexual history that traces the line of hurt and redemption through three generations.

Source

<http://www.themanbookerprize.com/prize/books/312>