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Thurber House Announces Semi-finalists for 2022 Thurber Prize for American Humor

21st annual award show will take place on April 22nd in Columbus

(COLUMBUS) - The Thurber House announced the semi-finalists for the Thurber Prize for American Humor. Awarded since 1997 and annually since 2004, the Thurber Prize recognizes the best humor writing published over the past year. Past winners include *The Daily Show* hosts Jon Stewart and Trevor Noah, *New Yorker* staff writers Calvin Trillin and Ian Frazier, and humorists Simon Rich, Patricia Lockwood, Harrison Scott Key, Julie Schumacher and Alan Zweibel.

The 21st Annual Thurber Prize event will take place on Friday, April 22nd at the Lincoln Theater, 769 E Long St. Hosted annually by a top contemporary humorist, attendees are entertained with hilarious surprises, including readings from the three top finalists. This red-carpet extravaganza and all-new show written by Columbus creatives culminates with the announcement of the winner of The Thurber Prize for American Humor. Tickets for the event will go on sale on Tuesday, March 15th.

This year's semi-finalists include:

Shannon Reed, Why Did I Get A B?: This hilarious and candid collection of personal essays about teaching follows in the footsteps of such classics as *Teach Like Your Hair's on Fire*, *The Courage to Teach*, and *Up the Down Staircase*. Shannon Reed has been a teacher and professor in Western Pennsylvania and New York City for the last twenty years, and now teaches Creative Writing at the University of Pittsburgh.

Mike Birbiglia, *The New One: Painfully True Stories from a Reluctant Dad*: With laugh-out-loud funny parenting observations, the *New York Times* bestselling author and award-winning comedian delivers a book that is perfect for anyone who has ever raised a child, been a child, or refuses to stop acting like one. A stand-up comedian, actor, storyteller, director, producer and writer, Birbiglia was a finalist for the 2011 Thurber Prize for *Sleepwalk with Me and Other Painfully True Stories*.

M.O. Walsh, The Big Door Prize: The New York Times bestselling author of My Sunshine Away returns with another instant Southern classic: a gripping and heartfelt novel about a mysterious machine that upends a small Louisiana town, asking us all to wonder if who we truly are is who we truly could be. Walsh's fiction and essays have appeared in the New York Times, The Guardian and The Paris Review, and he currently directs The Creative Writing Workshop at the University of New Orleans.

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Laura Pedersen, A Theory of Everything Else: Leaving quantum physics to Stephen J. Hawking, this book of essays is based on Pedersen's own groundbreaking experiences as a dog walker, camp counselor, and



Bingo caller -- a series of colorful helium balloons that entertain as well as affirm and uplift. The youngest person at age 20 to have a seat on the American Stock Exchange, Pedersen wrote about that experience in her first hilarious book, *Play Money*. At age 25, she was the youngest columnist for *The New York Times*.

James McBride, Deacon King Kong: McBride's novel, revolving around a shooting in a Brooklyn housing project, shows us that not all secrets are meant to be hidden, that the best way to grow is to face change without fear, and that the seeds of love lie in hope and compassion. Deacon King Kong has been named one of the Top Ten books of the year by The New York Times, Entertainment Weekly and TIME Magazine. An author, musician, and screenwriter, McBride's landmark memoir, The Color of Water, published in 1996, has sold millions of copies.

Alexandra Petri, Nothing Is Wrong and Here Is Why: These impossibly cheerful essays on the routine horrors of the present era explain everything from the resurgence of measles to the fiasco of the presidency. Humorist Petri became the youngest person to have a column in *The Washington Post*, and runs the ComPost blog on the paper's website. Her book of essays *A Field Guide to Awkward Silences* was published in 2015.

"We are so excited for The Prize this year, we've really added so much to the whole experience— from a new and enhanced digital judging process, to reimagining the show, to the overall production value and experience for everyone involved" said Laurie Lathan, Thurber House Executive Director. "We think we have some really wonderful representation of American humor writing for 2022, and we really look forward to the event in April."

ABOUT THURBER HOUSE:

Founded in 1984, Thurber House is a nonprofit literary arts center, James Thurber Museum, historic landmark, and gathering place for readers, writers, and artists of all ages. We are based in the restored 1873 home of humorist, cartoonist, author, playwright, and journalist James Thurber, widely considered one of the foremost American humorists of the 20th century. Thurber House programs include The Thurber Prize for American Humor, author events featuring nationally bestselling authors and local authors, writing workshops for children and adults, writer residencies, and more.

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