

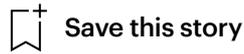
THE 2023 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS LONGLIST: NONFICTION

By The New Yorker

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Illustration by Mathieu Larone



This week, [The New Yorker](#) is announcing the longlists for the 2023 National Book Awards. So far, we've presented the lists for [Young People's Literature](#), [Translated Literature](#), and [Poetry](#). Check back tomorrow morning for Fiction.

Some thirty years ago, the writer Cristina Rivera Garza's sister Liliana was killed in Mexico City by an ex-boyfriend who was never brought to justice. In "Liliana's Invincible Summer: A Sister's Search for Justice," Rivera Garza uses police reports, notebooks, handwritten letters, and interviews to reconstruct the events surrounding her sister's murder. The book begins in Mexico City, where Rivera Garza has travelled to reclaim the unresolved case file. "There is something obscene about the beauty of the city—its boutiques, gazebos, poplars—and something frightening in Rivera Garza's ability to narrate this beauty in light of her terrible quest," Merve Emre writes, in an [essay](#) on Rivera Garza's work. "When she finally finds the file and opens it, voices rise from its pages—the voices of Liliana, her parents, her friends, and the friends of her murderer. They are testimonies not to Liliana's death but to her life."

"Liliana's Invincible Summer" is on this year's Longlist for the National Book Award in Nonfiction. It is one of several works that mine documents from the past in order to forge new meaning. Jonathan Eig's "King: A Life" draws on newly declassified F.B.I. files to create a groundbreaking biography of Martin Luther King, Jr.; Christina Sharpe's "Ordinary Notes" collects personal and public artifacts to bear witness to the legacy of white supremacy and create a "Dictionary of Untranslatable Blackness." "I Saw Death Coming: A History of Terror and Survival in the War Against Reconstruction," by Kidada E. Williams, uses archival records and oral history to construct a history of the Reconstruction-era South from the

perspective of the formerly enslaved.

The titles on the list were selected from six hundred and thirty eight submissions from publishers. Viet Thanh Nguyen, whose memoir, “A Man of Two Faces,” was excerpted in *The New Yorker*, is the only honoree on this list who has been previously recognized by the National Book Awards. The full list is below.

Ned Blackhawk, “The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History”

Yale University Press

Jonathan Eig, “King: A Life”

Farrar, Straus & Giroux / Macmillan Publishers

Viet Thanh Nguyen, “A Man of Two Faces: A Memoir, A History, A Memorial”

Grove Press / Grove Atlantic

Donovan X. Ramsey, “When Crack Was King: A People’s History of a Misunderstood Era”

One World / Penguin Random House

Cristina Rivera Garza, “Liliana’s Invincible Summer: A Sister’s Search for Justice”

Hogarth / Penguin Random House

Prudence Peiffer, “The Slip: The New York City Street That Changed American Art Forever”

Harper / HarperCollins Publishers

Christina Sharpe, “Ordinary Notes”

Farrar, Straus & Giroux / Macmillan Publishers

Raja Shehadeh, “We Could Have Been Friends, My Father and I: A

Palestinian Memoir”

Other Press

John Vaillant, “Fire Weather: A True Story from a Hotter World”

Knopf / Penguin Random House

Kidada E. Williams, “I Saw Death Coming: A History of Terror and Survival in the War Against Reconstruction”

Bloomsbury Publishing

The judges for the category this year are the *New Yorker* contributing writer Hanif Abdurraqib, whose book “A Little Devil in America: Notes in Praise of Black Performance” was a finalist for the National Book Award in 2021, Ada Ferrer, the author of “Cuba: An American History,” James Fugate, a co-founder of Eso Won Books, Sarah Schulman, a novelist and a historian of the AIDS epidemic, and Sonia Shah, the author of “The Next Great Migration: The Beauty and Terror of Life on the Move.” ♦