

16 November 1972

The Rt Hon. Roy Jenkins M.P.  
The House of Commons,  
London S.W. 1

Dear Mr Jenkins,

I now have much pleasure in letting you know the arrangements for the evening of 23 November. As you will have seen from the invitation card the dinner is 7 for 7.30 p.m. and people will take their seats at 8 o'clock approximately. Rayner Unwin, President of the Publishers Association and Chairman of George Allen & Unwin, will introduce you in his role of President, the introduction being very brief. We will then look forward to hearing you speak for approximately 15 minutes, but your time is elastic, depending entirely upon how long you wish to speak.

After you have spoken Cyril Connolly, as Chairman of the Panel of Judges, will speak about the four short-listed books and then announce the winner. At that point the winner will come to the top table and you will present him with the trophy and a cheque for £5,000. For your confidential information, as I imagine you will wish to know, the winner is John Berger for his novel 'G'; but as no one will know this until Cyril Connolly makes the announcement I must ask you to keep it to yourself. After you have presented the cheque Mr Berger will possibly make his own contribution and then W. N. Robson, a Director of Booker-McConnell, will finish up the evening by thanking everyone.

The following paragraph of Booker information will tell you how the idea of instituting a major literary prize was originally thought of separately by the Publishers Association and Booker-McConnell.

The Publishers Association was concerned that the state of fiction in this country seemed to be on the decline and felt that the time for 'patronage' had come again and, as clearly it could not come from private individuals, industry seemed the logical answer. (At this time no industrial sponsor for a literary prize existed). At the same time, the beginning of 1968, Booker-McConnell had become involved in the literary field to some extent and also saw the necessity of

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improving the lot of the novelist. This fortunate coincidence of ideas resulted in the institution of the Booker Prize, Britain's major literary award. The first award under the prize was made in 1969 to P. H. Newby for his book 'Something to Answer For'; in 1970 to Bernice Rubens for her book 'The Elected Member', and in 1971 to V. S. Naipaul for 'In a Free State'. The winner of the Prize receives a statuette and £5,000 tax free. The normal procedure in the past has been that a panel of 5 judges select a short list of six books, one of which will be the winner. The only 'scandal' in the history of the Prize was Malcolm Muggeridge resigning last year half-way through the year on the grounds that he was 'out of sympathy with the books' because of their pornographic content.

This year the Judges were Cyril Connolly, Chairman, Elizabeth Bowen and George Steiner. It is the first time that only four books have been selected for the short list. The books, including the winner are:

<u>G</u>	John Berger	Weidenfeld & Nicolson
<u>The Bird of Night</u>	Susan Hill	Hamish Hamilton
<u>The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith</u>	Thomas Keneally	Angus & Robertson
<u>Pasmore</u>	David Storey	Longman

The National Book League now administers the Booker Prize with the Publishers Association and Booker-McConnell remaining the joint sponsors.

Naturally we do not expect you to talk on the history of the prize unless you wish to, as some reference will be made to it, but I felt that this information might be of use to you during the evening as a whole. One issue that I hardly dare mention, but which the audience will be extremely interested in hearing, is Public Lending Rights and the Public Lending Rights Report. One of the sad things is that as the Report was published on 18 May the Government must surely have had time to consider and if it so wished implement the recommendations made. I only