2021 Caine Prize Reviews at OlongoAfrica

Kọ́lá Túbọ̀sún
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By now, you must have heard about the shortlist of the Ako Caine Prize stories for 2021. It includes stellar offerings from Doreen Baingana, Rémy Ngamije, Meron Hadero, Troy Onyango, and Iryn Tushabe. We at Olongo wish them hearty congratulations! Caine Prizewinners and shortlistees have always gone on to become proud names in African literature, from Binyavanga Wainaina to Chimamanda Adichie to Tọ́pẹ́ Fọlárìn, to name a few.

But there has also been a proud and storied culture of critical appraisal of Caine Prize stories, leading to intense and passionate conversations in social, popular, and book media circles before the Prizewinner is announced. In the last couple of years, that has waned. We do not point fingers, but we seek to bring it back on this platform as a way of engaging the literary space, encourage conversation around the prize and the stories it fetes. It's a form of feedback not just for the writers of the story, the judges of the Prize, but also the reading audience. It is a dialogue about the nature of our stories, and the future into which they take us.

You may already have read two of these reviews.

Last week, on June 28, we published a review of *This Little Light of Mine* by Troy Onyango, written by Zanta Nkumane.

This weekend, we published a second one. It is a review of Doreen Baingana's Memories of War, written by Muchira Gachenge.

This is the forthcoming schedule for the rest of the stories for review:

- Jarred Thompson reviews Rémy Ngamije's *The Giver of Nicknames* (Published on July 9th, 2021)

- Titi Akinsanmi reviews Iryn Tushabe's *A Separation* (Published on July 15th, 2021)
- Uche Umez reviews Meron Hadero's *The Street Sweep* (July 21th, 2021)
- Ọpẹ́ Adédèji gives us an overview of *all* the stories (July 23rd, 2021) against the background of the Caine Prize stories of the past, the current stage of prose fiction in Africa today, and the topics with which the current stories engage. We look forward to that.
- July 26th, 2021 — The winner of the Prize is announced.

We hope you come with us on this journey. Share the reviews with your friends. But more importantly, read the stories, and share your thoughts on both the story and the reviews. Our aim is to generate conversation, and we hope that you'll be a part of that.

