



# PEN/FAULKNER

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## KAREN JOY FOWLER RECEIVES 2014 PEN/FAULKNER AWARD FOR FICTION

**Washington, DC**—Karen Joy Fowler’s *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* (G.P. Putnam’s Sons) has been selected as the winner of the 2014 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction. The announcement was made today by the directors of the PEN/Faulkner Foundation, Susan Richards Shreve and Robert Stone, Co-Chairwoman and Co-Chairman.

The **judges**—Madison Smartt Bell, Manuel Muñoz, and Achy Obejas—considered more than 430 novels and short story collections by American authors published in the U.S. during the 2013 calendar year. Submissions came from 175 publishing houses, including small and academic presses. There is no fee for a publisher or writer to submit a book.

**The honored book**, *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*, presents Rosemary Cooke, a twenty-two-year-old narrator, who comes from what seems an ordinary 1970’s Midwestern family: two scientist parents—her father is a psychology professor at Indiana University—and three children. Rosemary begins her story after grief over her lost sister, Fern, has fissured her family. Rosemary has just been arrested on her college campus; her runaway brother is wanted by the FBI; and her family has still never approached the topic of Fern, who disappeared when Rosemary was five. A quarter of the way through her story, Rosemary reveals a strange truth, deftly hidden from the reader until that point: Fern is a chimpanzee, and she and Rosemary were twinned as the subjects of a behavioral psychology experiment conducted by Rosemary’s father and gone terribly awry. To explain why she didn’t share this detail sooner, Rosemary says, “I tell you Fern is a chimp and, already, you aren’t thinking of her as my sister. You’re thinking instead that we loved her as if she were some kind of pet.”

In the words of judge Manuel Muñoz, “This superb novel is not only comic and smart, it packs a surprising emotional punch. Fowler captures an altogether new dimension of the meaning—and heartbreak—of family dynamics.”

Judge Madison Smartt Bell adds, “This is a book that really does tell us something new about what it is to be human—and what it is not to be.”

Fowler is the author of six previous novels including *The Jane Austen Book Club* and *Sister Noon*, which was a finalist for the 2001 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction. She lives in Santa Cruz, California.

The PEN/Faulkner Award is America’s largest peer juried prize for fiction. As winner, Fowler receives \$15,000. Each of the four finalists— Daniel Alarcón for *At Night We Walk in Circles* (Riverhead Books); Percival Everett for *Percival Everett by Virgil Russell* (Graywolf Press); Joan Silber for *Fools* (W.W. Norton & Company); and Valerie Trueblood for *Search Party: Stories of Rescue* (Counterpoint Press)—receives \$5,000.

All five authors will be honored during the **34<sup>th</sup> Annual PEN/Faulkner Award Ceremony** at the Folger Shakespeare Library, located at 201 East Capitol Street, SE, on **Saturday, May 10, 2014** at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are \$100, and can be purchased by phoning the Folger Box Office at (202) 544-7077, or online at: [www.folger.edu/penfaulkneraward](http://www.folger.edu/penfaulkneraward)

The PEN/Faulkner Award was first given in 1981. Past winners include last year’s winner, Benjamin Alire Sáenz, as well as Joseph O’Neill, E.L. Doctorow, Ann Patchett, Philip Roth, John Updike, Sherman Alexie, Annie Proulx and John Edgar Wideman, among others. A full list of winners is available at: <http://www.penfaulkner.org/2011/08/01/1996-2010-award-winners-finalists/>

The PEN/Faulkner Foundation is committed to building audiences for exceptional literature and bringing writers together with their readers. This mission is accomplished through **a reading series** at the Folger Shakespeare Library by distinguished writers who have won the respect of readers and writers alike; the **PEN/Faulkner Award**; the **PEN/Malamud Award**, honoring excellence in the short story; and the **Writers in Schools** program, which brings nationally and internationally-acclaimed authors to public high school classrooms, and to book groups of teen parents and incarcerated youth, in Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD.

For More Information, visit [www.penfaulkner.org](http://www.penfaulkner.org)

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