

Roberto Bolaño, Juan Felipe Herrera win book critics awards

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NEW YORK — The [National Book Critics Circle](#), which honors stories and scholarship from around the world, awarded the fiction prize to "2666," the posthumous novel by the late Chilean author [Roberto Bolaño](#), who died in 2003.

Last year, Dominican-American author [Junot Díaz](#) won the fiction award for "The Brief Wondrous Life of [Oscar Wao](#)."

Reviewers are largely responsible for Bolaño's posthumous following in the [United States](#), where "2666" — a very long and complex novel in translation — has found surprising and welcome success.

Bolaño's translator, [Natasha Wimmer](#), accepted the award on his behalf and recalled that the author himself once said that "posthumous" sounded like a Roman gladiator.

For the first time in the awards' history, two winners were named for one category: [August Kleinzahler](#)'s "Sleeping It Off in [Rapid City](#)" and [Juan Felipe Herrera](#)'s "Half the World in Light: New and Selected Poems" shared the poetry prize.

Herrera is the son of migrant workers from [Mexico](#), and his "Half the World in Light" has been described as a celebration of the Chicano identity and community.

The award for general nonfiction to "The Forever War," [Dexter Filkins](#)' reporting on the conflicts in [Iraq](#) and [Afghanistan](#); and the autobiography prize to [Ariel Sabar](#)'s "My Father's Paradise," which traces the author's Jewish roots in Kurdish Iraq.

Nobel laureate [V.S. Naipaul](#), a native of Trinidad who now lives in [England](#), was the subject of the biography winner, Patrick French's "The World Is What It Is." [Seth Lerer](#)'s "Children's Literature," which traces young people's stories as far back as ancient [Greece](#) and Aesop's fables, was cited for criticism.

Lerer, noting his subject matter, thought it fitting to bring up an old cliché and "thank all the little people."

The awards carry a great deal of prestige but no cash, fitting for a time when reviewers have struggled to hold on to their jobs and many members of the critics circle's board are freelancers.

An award for lifetime achievement was given to the American center of PEN, the international writers association.

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