



Hollins Announces Winner of the 2022 Margaret Wise Brown Prize in Children's Literature

- *The annual award showcases the most distinguished picture book manuscript as selected by a panel of judges.*
- *This year's recipient is Muon Thi Van for *Wishes*.*
- *The Margaret Wise Brown Prize is among the few children's book honors with a cash award.*

Roanoke, Va. – Hollins University has honored Vietnamese author [Muon Thi Van](#) as the winner of the seventh annual Margaret Wise Brown Prize in Children's Literature.

Muon will receive an engraved medal and a \$1,000 cash prize for her book *Wishes*, illustrated by [Victo Ngai](#) and published by Orchard Books. Inspired by actual events in the author's life, *Wishes* is the story of one Vietnamese family's search for a new home on the other side of the world, and the impact that makes on one of the family's youngest members.

“Muon Thi Van takes the reader on a heart-wrenching journey, from leaving the familiarity of home to navigating the perils of an ocean voyage to finally arriving at a place of hope and new beginnings,” stated the judges for this year's prize, acclaimed children's book authors [Marla Frazee](#), [David LaRochelle](#), and [Meg Medina](#). “All of this is done with just 75 carefully chosen words. The originality of having inanimate objects voice the child's feelings, and the depth of emotion captured in so few words, astounded [us] and made for an inventive, powerful book that has lingered in our hearts long after we read it.”

The Margaret Wise Brown Prize is just the latest honor for *Wishes*. It was named the Best Picture Book of 2021 by *BookPage*; received the 2022 ILA Notable Books for a Global Society award; and was co-winner of the Golden Poppy Award for children's picture books. *Wishes* is

also an NPR Best Book of the Year, a *Horn Book* 2021 Fanfare Pick, and a 2021 New York Public Library's Best Books for Kids List Pick.

Judges for this year's Margaret Wise Brown Prize also named one Honor Book: *The Longest Letsgoboy*, written by debut author [Derick Wilder](#), illustrated by [Cátia Chen](#), and published by Chronicle Books. "The story is told from a dog's point of view," the judges said. "As Letsgoboy takes the final walk of his earthly life with his little girl, the narration and dog language are perfectly attuned to how a child takes in the word as well. *The Longest Letsgoboy* transports the reader on a journey which is by turns joyous, heartbreaking, comforting and full of love."

The judges added that both *Wishes* and *The Longest Letsgoboy* "explore the difficult terrain of loss using a sophisticated sense of language for children. Whether spare to capture the very essence of longing and hope in leaving a homeland, or immersive in a rich, inventive vocabulary about companionship, these works represent the power of language to help children understand the deep changes they sometimes face."

Each year, Hollins invites nominations for the prize from children's book publishers located across the country and around the world. A three-judge panel, consisting of established picture book authors, reviews the nominations and chooses a winner.

Hollins established the Margaret Wise Brown Prize in Children's Literature as a way to pay tribute to one of its best-known alumnae and one of America's most beloved children's authors. The cash prizes are made possible by an endowed fund created by James Rockefeller, Brown's fiancé at the time of her death.

“The Margaret Wise Brown Prize is one of the few children’s book awards that has a cash prize attached,” said Lisa Rowe Fraustino, director of the graduate programs in children’s literature at Hollins.

The engraved medal presented to the winners was conceived by award-winning sculptor, painter, and Hollins alumna Betty Branch of Roanoke. Winners and Honor Book recipients are presented an original linocut certificate designed and donated by Ashley Wolff, author and/or illustrator of over 50 children’s books.

Margaret Wise Brown graduated from Hollins in 1932 and went on to write *Goodnight Moon*, *The Runaway Bunny*, and other children’s classics before she died in 1952. Hollins celebrated her life and work with a year-long Margaret Wise Brown Festival in 2011 and 2012, which featured stage and musical adaptations of her work along with readings, workshops, guest lectures, and other activities for all ages.

The study of children’s literature as a scholarly experience was initiated at Hollins in 1973; in 1992, the graduate program in children’s literature was founded. Today, Hollins offers [summer M.A. and M.F.A. programs exclusively in the study and writing of children’s literature](#), an [M.F.A. in children’s book writing and illustrating](#), and a [graduate-level certificate in children’s book illustration](#).

This fall, Hollins’ children’s literature program will release information on how to submit books for consideration for the 2023 Margaret Wise Brown Prize.

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