

**DARKE**

2016

*The*  
**NICK DARKE  
WRITERS' AWARD**

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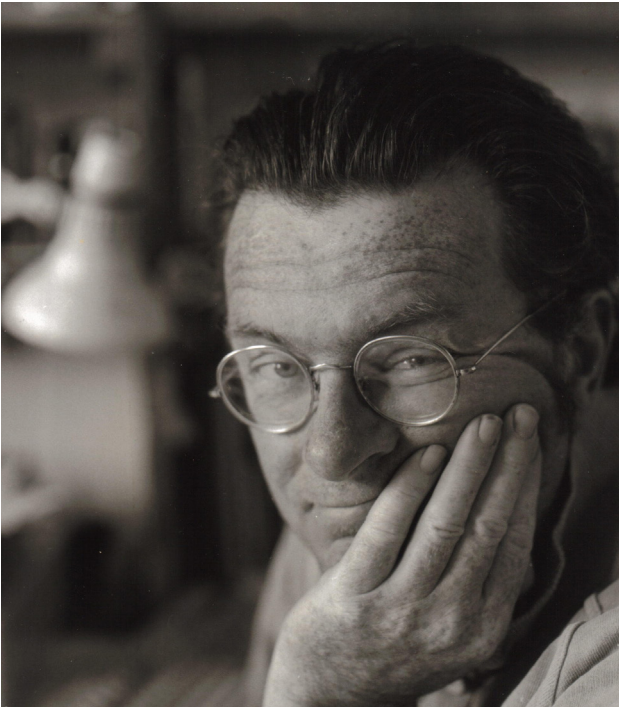
*Celebrating the best writing  
for stage, screen and radio*

**Submission Information**

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# NICK DARKE

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Born and educated in Cornwall, England, the playwright Nick Darke studied acting at Rose Bruford College, Kent before learning his craft at The Victoria Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent. Here Nick performed in over 80 plays and in 1978 wrote his first play, *Never Say Rabbit in a Boat*. Its success led him to give up acting and in the following year he won the George Devine Award.

His work attracted further commissions and everything he wrote for the theatre was produced. This included 24 plays that were staged at The National Theatre, London; The Royal Shakespeare Company, Stratford-upon-Avon; The Bush, London; by Kneehigh Theatre and at The Royal Court, London.

He wrote several radio plays and made documentaries for radio and also successfully wrote for television and film. He moved back to Cornwall in 1990 and enjoyed the life of his childhood, fishing and wrecking (beachcombing). In 2001 he had a stroke which affected his speech and reading and writing. He and his wife Jane made the film, *The Wrecking Season* about the contacts he made tracing fishing gear back to the east coast of America. (Broadcast by BBC Four in 2005 and 2010)

Nick died of cancer in 2005, aged 56 with his funeral held on the beach. He and Jane filmed the last few months of his life. She made the film *The Art of Catching Lobsters* (BBC Four 2007) about their life together and grief. They have two sons; Jim is a marine scientist, Henry a filmmaker and writer.

For more information about Nick's life and work please visit: [falmouth.ac.uk/nickdarkeaward](http://falmouth.ac.uk/nickdarkeaward)



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# NICK DARKE

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## Extract from *The Body* by Nick Darke

*Early morning. A bright summer's day. A dead MARINE lies centre stage. WALT stands guard by the fence. Larks sing. A jet takes off and flies overhead. Larks sing. The dead MARINE sits up and tells a story to the audience.*

**BODY:** When I was alive, towards the end of my life – by the way I'm dead right now, I died, close on five minutes ago – I had a fear of yawning. Got to figuring if I yawned too hard the skin round my lips, when they opened wide, would peel right back over my head and down my neck and turn me inside out. I started to yawn when I was sixteen, back home, when I was bored. I know that healthy guys when they hit sixteen start to do things other than yawn. But believe me where I came from there was little hope of that. And yawning was the next best thing. One day my paw caught me yawning. He said, 'Son, join the marines'. (*Here, as the BODY talks, WALT starts humming to himself, 'The Star Spangled Banner'.*) I said, 'Paw I'm bored'. He said, 'The marines will sure kick the shit outa that.' So. I enlisted. First thing they do is cut my hair off. Which kinda makes me uneasy cus by now I'd reached neurosis point about this skin peeling business, and I figured the only thing which would stop the skin from shooting right back over the top of my skull when I yawned was the hair. Figured it might like hold it in check long enough for me to yank it all back into place. But on my first day... had my head shaved... believe me I kept my mouth tight shut.

But, by the end of my training at boot camp on Parris Island I was a highly-tuned killing machine, prepared to be sent to any part of the world, get shot up and die protecting the free world from the onslaught of Communism. Paw was right. Sure kicked the shit outa yawning. I was ready to kill. Go over the top. I had a weapon in my hand and my finger itched to squeeze the trigger. Got to figure if it itched much more it'd drop off. I had visions of me, under fire, storming a tree line in a fire fight and comin' up face to face with a big Soviet stormtrooper and there I am weapon in hand ready to blast the bastard to boot hill finger on the trigger and the damn thing's itchin' so much it drops off. We were issued with ointment anyhow to relieve the... er, but, what happens? I'm sent here. Guarding warheads. Sitting on top of that observation tower, which, thank Christ was made unsafe by the last gale, and walking up and down the fence, guarding warheads against sheep! I started yawning again. Twice, three times a day. Then it hit me. We were trained to kill, and to die. Now I dunno whether any a you good people are dead, but if you are still alive, the one thing that bothers us about dying is what happens after. I only died five minutes ago but it strikes me being dead is much the same as being alive. It's boring. I think I've bin sent to hell. Don't die. I made a mistake. I erred. It's hell all right. So. I'm dead. And in hell.

*He lies down again. Dead. The LIEUTENANT walks on, he joins WALT and they march around the perimeter.*

**WALT:** Good day lieutenant.

**LIEUTENANT:** Oh hi, er, Walt. Hear the larks?

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# FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY

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Falmouth University is a specialist multi-arts institution with an international reputation in art, design, media, performance and writing. Following more than a century of excellence in creative education, it has evolved into the UK's top arts university (Guardian University Guide, 2016; Sunday Times League Table, 2015 & 2016).

Falmouth's research and innovation shapes its teaching and the world we live in, with national and international partnerships providing opportunities for both business and students. At the heart of creativity in the UK and the world, Falmouth University explores the convergence between technology and the arts, making a vital contribution to the resurgence of the local and global economies.

The Award is funded by Falmouth University's Academy of Music and Theatre Arts (AMATA) and the School of Writing & Journalism. An international venue, AMATA provides an intensive and connected environment for the study and practice of the performing arts. The School of Writing & Journalism offers practice-based creative and professional writing courses alongside English degrees that focus on wide critical reading within relevant cultural contexts.

falmouth.ac.uk

## **Falmouth University's Academic Departments**

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Academy of Music and Theatre Arts  
Falmouth School of Art  
Fashion & Textiles Institute  
Games Academy  
Institute of Photography  
School of Architecture, Design & Interiors  
School of Communication Design  
School of Film & Television  
School of Writing & Journalism

## **The Nick Darke Archive**

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Falmouth University is delighted to hold the professional archive of Nick Darke, following the generous donation of papers from his family. The Collection contains a broad range of preparatory work and scripts for his 30 plays, along with publicity, promotional material, photographs and correspondence. Nick's work for television, film and radio is also well represented. Inspiring, humbling, humorous, and at times deeply moving, the records document Nick's interest in environmental issues, music, Cornish history and culture, as well as his recovery from a stroke in 2001. Nick's wife, Jane, continues to be involved with both the Collection and its use.

The Collection is complimented well by other holdings relating to performance activity in Cornwall, including the archives of Wildworks and Kneehigh theatre companies, the latter whom Nick wrote for on many occasions.

The Collection is widely available to all, by appointment in the Library on the Penryn Campus. We enthusiastically welcome applicants to the Nick Darke Writers' Award keen to learn more about his craft.

For more information or to arrange access please contact us:

Tel: +44 (0)1326 254303  
Email: [archives@fxplus.ac.uk](mailto:archives@fxplus.ac.uk)  
[@FXArchives](http://library.fxplus.ac.uk/archives)

**THE UK'S NO.1**  
**ARTS UNIVERSITY**  
2015 & 2016 SUNDAY TIMES LEAGUE TABLE

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# THE AWARD

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The Nick Darke Writers' Award was set up in 2006 to celebrate the best writing for stage, screen and radio.

The Award is open to all writers with a prize of £6,000.

This year's category is stage play.

Following Nick Darke's death the Nick Darke Award was conceived by his wife, the artist and film maker Jane Darke, with the support of his family. Nick Darke wrote in many forms but earned his living in the world of theatre, screen and radio.

With the opportunity to win £6,000 and open to all writers, this competition provides the time to write that financial support facilitates.

This year's category is stage play. Applicants should submit a full script along with a one-page synopsis and a short writing CV by Monday 30 May 2016. The submissions will be read by a group of readers who will produce a longlist for the Longlist Committee. The Longlist Committee will reduce the submissions to a final shortlist of eight for the judges. Announcement of the winner will take place in autumn 2016.

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## The Judges

### Jeremy Howe

Drama Commissioning  
Editor for Radio 4, UK

### Molly Dineen

BAFTA and Royal Television  
Society award-winning UK  
television documentary director,  
cinematographer and producer

### Roger Michell

Theatre, television and film  
director whose work includes  
the films *Notting Hill*, *Changing  
Lanes* and *Morning Glory*

### Henry Darke

Writer-director

### Carl Grose

Writer, director and actor and the  
first winner of the Nick Darke Award

### Margaret Matheson

Producer for cinema and  
television, her credits include  
the *Original Scum* (banned by  
the BBC), *Abigail's Party* and  
Oscar winning *Antonia's Line*

The Nick Darke Writers' Award is solely funded by Falmouth University through the Academy of Music and Theatre Arts (AMATA) and the School of Writing & Journalism. The relationship between Falmouth and the Award recognises Nick Darke's impact across the arts and endeavours to continue his legacy through the promotion of talent.

[falmouth.ac.uk/nickdarkeaward](http://falmouth.ac.uk/nickdarkeaward)

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## Contact information

Kerry Taylor  
The Nick Darke Writers' Award  
Falmouth University  
Penryn Campus  
Treliever Road  
Penryn  
Cornwall TR10 9FE, UK

Tel: +44 (0)1326 253751  
Email: [nickdarkeaward@falmouth.ac.uk](mailto:nickdarkeaward@falmouth.ac.uk)

@FalmouthUni  
#NickDarkeAward

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# SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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## 1 Eligibility

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- 1.1 The application must be made in English.
- 1.2 The competition is open to all national and international writers aged 16 and over.
- 1.3 The writer must be the sole original author. The competition is not open to collaborations.

## 2 Criteria

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- 2.1 Stage play.

## 3 Submission procedure

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- 3.1 Please submit a full stage play script of approximately one hour in length.
- 3.2 Please also submit a one page synopsis about the play.
- 3.3 Email a short CV with your submission and include your contact details. If you fail to do so your application will not be considered.
- 3.4 Please email your submission in two PDF documents, one containing your CV and the other containing your synopsis and script to: [nickdarkeaward@falmouth.ac.uk](mailto:nickdarkeaward@falmouth.ac.uk)
- 3.5 Confirmation of receipt of application will be sent by email.
- 3.6 Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.
- 3.7 The deadline for submissions is 17:00 (GMT) Monday 30 May 2016.

*Please tell us if you have any communication requirements and what these are (for example a preference for material in large print or a need for everything on audio CD).*

## 4 Judging procedure

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- 4.1 Your work will be considered by a selection of readers who will compile a longlist for the Longlist Committee. The Longlist Committee will reduce the submissions to a final shortlist of eight for the judges.
- 4.2 Shortlisted applicants will be notified by Friday 26 August, 2016.
- 4.3 Unsuccessful applicants will not be notified, please assume your work has not been shortlisted if you haven't heard from us by Friday 26 August, 2016. The Nick Darke Writers' Award cannot enter into any correspondence regarding a submission nor can it offer any editorial notes or guidance. The shortlist and winner of the Award will be published on [falmouth.ac.uk/nickdarkeaward](http://falmouth.ac.uk/nickdarkeaward).
- 4.4 The judges will select one winner from the eight shortlisted writers.
- 4.5 The winner will be announced in autumn 2016 at an Award Ceremony.

## 5 The Winner

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- 5.1 The winning entrant will receive £6,000.
- 5.2 The winning entrant will receive mentoring from Carl Grose.

## 6 The small print

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- 6.1 The copyright for the piece remains solely with the author. However the Nick Darke Writers' Award must be credited on all subsequent publicity material.
- 6.2 The winning writer must make themselves and their winning piece available for all publicity purposes within reason. This may include a performance or reading of the work during the Award Ceremony.