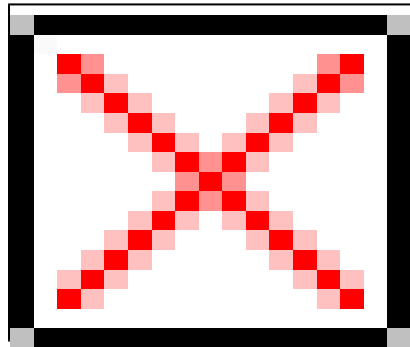
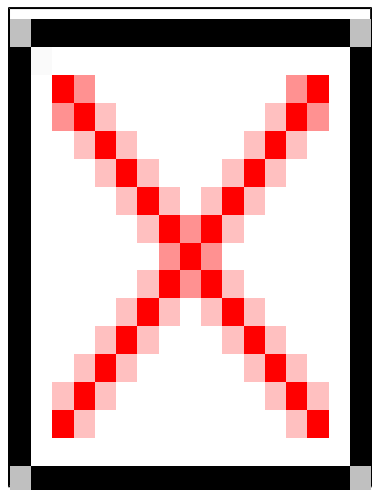




# LIZ HYDER AND EDITOR SARAH ODEDINA WIN 2020 BRANFORD BOASE AWARD



Liz Hyder is the winner of the [2020 Branford Boase Award](#) [1] for the year's outstanding debut novel for children for her powerful dystopia **Bearmouth**. The award is shared with her editor, Sarah Odedina, editor-at-large, Pushkin Children's Books.



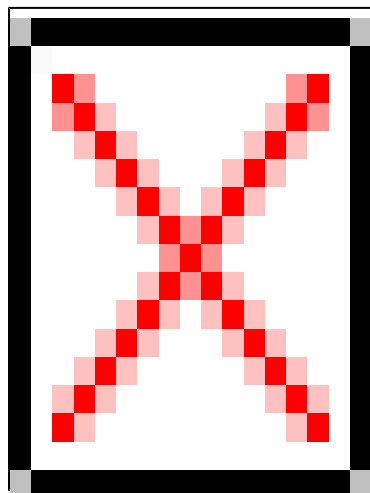
Now in its twenty-first year the **Branford Boase Award** was set up in memory of award-winning author Henrietta Branford and her editor Wendy Boase of Walker Books, who both died in 1999, and is unique in honouring editor as well as author.

The [submissions in 2020](#) [2] were particularly strong, and the judges chose to award Highly Commended to Katya Balen and her editor Lucy Mackay-Sim for [The Space We're In](#) [3], a moving story about a boy and his relationship with his younger brother, who is autistic.

**Muhammad Khan**, last year's **Branford Boase Award** winner says: '**Bearmouth** is a tour de force of a page turner with an intricate and stylised plot. Liz Hyder has created a gritty world for her hugely likeable protagonist, Newt, and a unique language which evolves as the exciting story unfolds. Original and unforgettable.'

Liz Hyder says: 'The **Branford Boase Award** is such a prestigious award and I love that it celebrates both editor and author. It was a true partnership to work with Sarah on **Bearmouth**. I learnt so much from her and can honestly say that the experience changed my life in so many ways. To be shortlisted felt like prize enough but to win feels utterly incredible! It means the world to me not only because I'm following in the footsteps of so many authors who I admire and cherish but also because I share it with Sarah who is the best, most inspiring, wonderful editor. Thank you from the

bottom of my heart!



Sarah Odedina said: 'What marks Liz out for me is her courage and originality and her faultless ability to create a story that holds the reader's attention by its sheer power. As an editor there cannot be many higher accolades than to be on the **Branford Boase Award** shortlist. To win the award in partnership with an author confirms that this task of bringing stories to young readers is a work of collaboration and one that is most successful when author and editor listen to one another and enjoy the process of creating a novel.'

Katya Balen and Lucy Mackay-Sim, Highly Commended, said: 'We're thrilled to have received this commendation from such a prestigious award, and to be recognised among a shortlist of such brilliant books – including a truly extraordinary winner. It's also a delight to receive this accolade together on a book we both care about so much.'

Muhammad Khan says: 'The **Space We're In** is a challenging story about neurodivergent siblings and what 'family' and 'home' means to them. Katya Balen writes with an assuredness that takes you directly into the characters' lives and makes you feel every beat of their joys, woes and frustrations. An incredible first novel.'

The judges were Sue Bastone, vice-chair **SLA**; Victoria Dilly, creator of the **Book Activist** blog; Layla Hudson of **Round Table Books**, Brixton; and Muhammad Khan, author of **I Am Thunder**, winner of the 2019 **Branford Boase Award**. The panel is chaired by Julia Eccleshare, children's director of the **Hay Festival** and **Branford Boase Award** founder.

Julia Eccleshare said: 'The **Branford Boase Award** is now in its 21st year, and it has really come of age. Each year we look for exceptional books, stories we haven't read before, told in new and original ways. Both **Bearmouth** and **The Space We're In** do this, and both Liz and Katya have extraordinarily memorable voices even amongst a shortlist of such exciting debut authors. We all agreed that **Bearmouth** is the outstanding novel on the list, a hugely brave and impressive piece of writing, testament to the skill of both author and editor in successfully creating such characters and such a narrative. It's a book that sends shivers down the spine, truly astounding. As always, we can't wait to read what the shortlisted authors will write next.'

The **Branford Boase Award** is supported by **Walker Books**. Liz Hyder received a cheque for £1,000 and both Liz and Sarah Odedina received engraved trophies.

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**Source URL (retrieved on Jan '21):** <http://m.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/news/liz-hyder-and-editor-sarah-odedina-win-2020-branford-boase-award>

#### **Links:**

[1] <https://branfordboaseaward.org.uk/>

[2] <http://m.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/news/shortlist-for-the-2020-branford-boase-award-announced>

[3] <http://m.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/238/childrens-books/reviews/the-space-were-in>