



Demick wins £20k Samuel Johnson prize

04.07.10 | [Katie Allen](#)

Los Angeles Times journalist Barbara Demick's "brave" exploration of North Korea has won the £20,000 BBC Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-

Fiction 2010.

Nothing to Envy: Real Lives in North Korea (Granta) follows the stories of six North Korean citizens living in the totalitarian country. Demick was announced the winner in a ceremony yesterday evening (1st July).

"It is the personal detail in *Nothing to Envy* that makes it both gripping and moving," said Evan Davis, chair of the judges and presenter of Radio 4 "Today". "I think we knew this book had something when we found ourselves reading it out loud to spouses and partners.

"And it is a real testament to Demick's writing, that a book on such a grim topic can be so hard to put down."

Jonathan Ruppin of Foyles said "It's a brave piece of reportage which highlights both our common human feelings and the diversity of human experience."

Demick's title beat competition from a five-strong shortlist including Jenny Uglow and Alex Bellos. Each of the shortlisted authors received £1,000 each.

BBC2 broadcast a "Culture Show" special on the awards at 11.20pm last night.

The shortlist in full:

- Alex's Adventures in Numberland* by Alex Bellos (Bloomsbury)
- Nothing to Envy: Real Lives in North Korea* by Barbara Demick (Granta)
- Blood Knots* by Luke Jennings (Atlantic)
- Too Big to Fail* by Andrew Ross Sorkin (Allen Lane)
- A Gambling Man* by Jenny Uglow (Faber)
- Catching Fire: How Cooking made us Human* by Richard Wrangham (Profile)

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