

Doerr, Guirgis among Pulitzer winners in arts

By HILLEL ITALIE, AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Anthony Doerr's "All the Light We Cannot See," a World War II novel that has been one of the top-selling literary works of the past year, has won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

Pulitzer judges on Monday cited Doerr's "imaginative and intricate novel," which alternates brief chapters between a blind French girl and young Nazi soldier. Doerr, fittingly, was in Paris when the award was announced. A resident of Boise, Idaho, Doerr needed more than a decade to complete "All the Light We Cannot See," more time than the war itself. He told The Associated Press that there were days when he thought "he would never finish the book" and was especially surprised by his Pulitzer since the story "contains no Americans."

The \$10,000 prize is given "for distinguished fiction by an American author, preferably dealing with American life."

"Obviously, it's wonderful," the 41-year-old Doerr said of the Pulitzer, adding that he was enjoying ice cream with his family when his editor called to share the news.

Fiction finalists included previous winner Richard Ford for "Let Me Be Frank with You," post-Hurricane Sandy stories featuring his longtime protagonist Frank Bascombe, the main character of his 1996 Pulitzer winner "Independence Day."

Also Monday, Stephen Adly Guirgis's "Between Riverside and Crazy" won the Pulitzer Prize for drama, with judges hailing the New York playwright for using "dark comedy to confront questions of life and death." The play tells of a cantankerous ex-cop who owns a piece of real estate on the Upper West Side and makes it a refuge for the hard-luck orphans who have become his surrogate family.

The Pulitzer for general nonfiction went to "The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History," by Elizabeth Kolbert, whose work was praised by judges as "an exploration of nature that forces readers to consider the threat posed by human behavior to a world of astonishing diversity."

David I. Kertzer's "The Pope and Mussolini: The Secret History of Pius XI and the Rise of Fascism in Europe" won for biography-autobiography, and "Encounters at the Heart of the World: A History of the Mandan People" by Elizabeth A. Fenn, won for history.

The poetry prize was given to Gregory Pardlo's "Digest" and Julia Wolfe's "Anthracite Fields" won for music.

Wolfe's work, described by judges as a "powerful oratorio for chorus and sextet," was composed after a year's study of the Pennsylvania coal mining industry at the turn of the 20th Century, near where Wolfe grew up in Montgomeryville, Pennsylvania.

"I'm definitely shell-shocked," Wolfe, 56, said from her home in New York City. She describes herself as a musical renegade, with inspirations that come from folks, classical and rock, and said she hopes the award can inspire other musicians to follow dreams that follow unconventional paths.

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