

B/N

SENIOR, OLIVE

# Jamaican writer wins Commonwealth prize.

The first winner of the £10,000 Commonwealth Writers' Prize is Olive Senior from Jamaica for *Summer Lightning* (Longman) it was announced earlier this month. Witi Ihimaera was runner up with *The Matriarch* (Heinemann) and received £1,000.

The Chairman of the Commonwealth Foundation, The Hon Robert Stanfield, said on behalf of the judges:

"The judges commented first and foremost on the very high standard of the submissions. Any one of them, the judges felt, would have been a noble winner.

"In reaching their final choice the judges were greatly influenced by the wish of the Prize's sponsors to both reward and encourage the upsurge of new Commonwealth writing and ensure that writers of merit reach a wider audience outside their country of origin. They were also very conscious of the difficulty of comparing writing and ensure that writers of merit reach a wider audience outside their country of origin. They were also very conscious of the difficulty of comparing novels with books of short stories. In the event they chose one from each category, though this was only because of individual merit in each case

"The judges expressed great satisfaction in having, even in the first year, so strong a field from

which to choose."

Olive was born in rural Jamaica and now lives near Kingston. She is currently editor

of *Jamaican Journal* and runs the publishing company of the Institute of Jamaica.

One of Jamaica's most exciting creative talents, *Summer Lightning* is her first collection of short stories. Previously she has published a collection of poetry *Talking of Trees* which was very favourably received.

Details of how to get a copy can be obtained from Longman's on (01) 935

0121.

The stories in *Summer Lightning* are set in rural Jamaica with heroes who are naive and vulnerable and bring to life with power and realism issues such as snobbery, ambition, jealousy, faith and love.

Written in vivid, colourful detail, these rich compelling stories recreate a whole range of emotions from childhood hope to brooding melancholy.



Olive Senior