1910s

- 1918: His Family by Ernest Poole
- 1919: The Magnificent Ambersons by Booth Tarkington

1920s

- **1920:** No award given^[a]
- 1921: The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton
- **1922:** Alice Adams by Booth Tarkington
- 1923: One of Ours by Willa Cather
- 1924: The Able McLaughlins by Margaret Wilson
- 1925: So Big by Edna Ferber
- 1926: Arrowsmith by Sinclair Lewis (declined prize)
- 1927: Early Autumn by Louis Bromfield
- 1928: The Bridge of San Luis Rey by Thornton Wilder
- **1929:** Scarlet Sister Mary by Julia Peterkin

1930s

- 1930: Laughing Boy by Oliver La Farge
- 1931: Years of Grace by Margaret Ayer Barnes
- **1932:** The Good Earth by Pearl S. Buck
- 1933: The Store by Thomas Sigismund Stribling
- 1934: Lamb in His Bosom by Caroline Miller
- 1935: Now in November by Josephine Winslow Johnson
- 1936: Honey in the Horn by Harold L. Davis
- 1937: Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell
- 1938: The Late George Apley by John Phillips Marquand
- **1939:** *The Yearling* by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings

1940s

- 1940: The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck
- 1941: No award given^[b]
- 1942: In This Our Life by Ellen Glasgow
- 1943: Dragon's Teeth by Upton Sinclair
- 1944: Journey in the Dark by Martin Flavin
- 1945: A Bell for Adano by John Hersey
- 1946: No award given^[c]
- 1947: All the King's Men by Robert Penn Warren
- 1948: Tales of the South Pacific by James A. Michener
- 1949: Guard of Honor by James Gould Cozzens

1950s

- **1950:** The Way West by A. B. Guthrie, Jr.
- 1951: The Town by Conrad Richter
- **1952:** *The Caine Mutiny* by Herman Wouk

- **1953:** The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway
- 1954: No award given^[d]
- 1955: A Fable by William Faulkner
- 1956: Andersonville by MacKinlay Kantor
- 1957: No award given^[e]
 - The Voice At The Back Door by Elizabeth Spencer
- **1958:** A Death in the Family by James Agee (posthumous win)
- 1959: The Travels of Jaimie McPheeters by Robert Lewis Taylor

1960s[edit]

- 1960: Advise and Consent by Allen Drury
- **1961:** *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee
- 1962: The Edge of Sadness by Edwin O'Connor
- **1963:** The Reivers by William Faulkner (posthumous win)
- 1964: No award given^[1]
 - o Coat Upon a Stick by Norman Fruchter
 - o Joanna and Ulysses by May Sarton
 - o Careful, He Might Hear You by Sumner Locke Elliott
 - And Then We Heard the Thunder by John Killens
- 1965: The Keepers of the House by Shirley Ann Grau
- 1966: The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter by Katherine Anne Porter
- **1967:** *The Fixer* by Bernard Malamud
- 1968: The Confessions of Nat Turner by William Styron
- 1969: House Made of Dawn by N. Scott Momaday

1970s

- 1970: The Collected Stories of Jean Stafford by Jean Stafford
- 1971: No award given^[g]
 - Losing Battles by Eudora Welty
 - *Mr. Sammler's Planet* by Saul Bellow
 - The Wheel of Love by Joyce Carol Oates
- 1972: Angle of Repose by Wallace Stegner
- 1973: The Optimist's Daughter by Eudora Welty
- 1974: No award given^[h]
 - o Gravity's Rainbow by Thomas Pynchon
- 1975: The Killer Angels by Michael Shaara
- **1976:** *Humboldt's Gift* by Saul Bellow
- 1977: No award given
 - o A River Runs Through It by Norman MacLean
 - Roots by Alex Haley (special Pulitzer Prize)
- 1978: Elbow Room by James Alan McPherson
- 1979: The Stories of John Cheever by John Cheever

1980s

Entries from this point on include the finalists listed after the winner for each year.

- 1980: The Executioner's Song by Norman Mailer
 - o Birdy by William Wharton
 - The Ghost Writer by Philip Roth
- 1981: A Confederacy of Dunces by John Kennedy Toole (posthumous win)
 - o Godric by Frederick Buechner
 - So Long, See You Tomorrow by William Maxwell
- 1982: Rabbit Is Rich by John Updike
 - o A Flag for Sunrise by Robert Stone
 - o Housekeeping by Marilynne Robinson
- 1983: The Color Purple by Alice Walker
 - o Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant by Anne Tyler
 - o Rabbis and Wives by Chaim Grade
- 1984: Ironweed by William Kennedy
 - o Cathedral by Raymond Carver
 - The Feud by Thomas Berger
- 1985: Foreign Affairs by Alison Lurie
 - o I Wish This War Were Over by Diana O'Hehir
 - o Leaving the Land by Douglas Unger
- 1986: Lonesome Dove by Larry McMurtry
 - o The Accidental Tourist by Anne Tyler
 - o Continental Drift by Russell Banks
- 1987: A Summons to Memphis by Peter Taylor
 - Paradise by Donald Barthelme
 - o Whites by Norman Rush
- 1988: Beloved by Toni Morrison
 - o Persian Nights by Diane Johnson
 - That Night by Alice McDermott
- **1989:** Breathing Lessons by Anne Tyler
 - o Where I'm Calling From by Raymond Carver

1990s[edit]

- **1990:** The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love by Oscar Hijuelos
 Billy Bathgate by E. L. Doctorow
- 1991: Rabbit at Rest by John Updike
 - o Mean Spirit by Linda Hogan
 - The Things They Carried by Tim O'Brien
- 1992: A Thousand Acres by Jane Smiley
 - o Jernigan by David Gates
 - o Lila: An Inquiry into Morals by Robert M. Pirsig
 - o Mao II by Don DeLillo
- **1993:** A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain by Robert Olen Butler
 - o At Weddings and Wakes by Alice McDermott
 - o Black Water by Joyce Carol Oates
- **1994:** *The Shipping News* by E. Annie Proulx

- o The Collected Stories of Reynolds Price by Reynolds Price
- Operation Shylock: A Confession by Philip Roth
- 1995: The Stone Diaries by Carol Shields
 - The Collected Stories of Grace Paley by Grace Paley
 - o What I Lived For by Joyce Carol Oates
 - **1996:** Independence Day by Richard Ford
 - Mr. Ives' Christmas by Oscar Hijuelos
 - Sabbath's Theater by Philip Roth
- 1997: Martin Dressler: The Tale of an American Dreamer by Steven Millhauser
 - The Manikin by Joanna Scott
 - o Unlocking the Air and Other Stories by Ursula K. Le Guin
- **1998:** American Pastoral by Philip Roth
 - o Bear and His Daughter: Stories by Robert Stone
 - o Underworld by Don DeLillo
- **1999:** *The Hours* by Michael Cunningham
 - o Cloudsplitter by Russell Banks
 - o The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver

2000s[edit]

- 2000: Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri
 - Close Range: Wyoming Stories by Annie Proulx
 - o Waiting by Ha Jin
- 2001: The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay by Michael Chabon
 - o Blonde by Joyce Carol Oates
 - The Quick and the Dead by Joy Williams
- 2002: Empire Falls by Richard Russo
 - o The Corrections by Jonathan Franzen
 - o John Henry Days by Colson Whitehead
- 2003: Middlesex by Jeffrey Eugenides
 - o Servants of the Map: Stories by Andrea Barrett
 - o You Are Not a Stranger Here by Adam Haslett
- 2004: The Known World by Edward P. Jones
 - o American Woman by Susan Choi
 - Evidence of Things Unseen by Marianne Wiggins
- 2005: Gilead by Marilynne Robinson
 - An Unfinished Season by Ward Just
 - o War Trash by Ha Jin
- 2006: March by Geraldine Brooks
 - The Bright Forever by Lee Martin
 - The March by E. L. Doctorow
- 2007: The Road by Cormac McCarthy
 - o After This by Alice McDermott
 - o The Echo Maker by Richard Powers
- 2008: The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao by Junot Díaz
 - o Shakespeare's Kitchen by Lore Segal
 - Tree of Smoke by Denis Johnson
- 2009: Olive Kitteridge by Elizabeth Strout
 - o All Souls by Christine Schutt

• The Plague of Doves by Louise Erdrich

2010s

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- 2010: Tinkers by Paul Harding
 - o In Other Rooms, Other Wonders by Daniyal Mueenuddin
 - Love in Infant Monkeys by Lydia Millet
 - 2011: A Visit From the Goon Squad by Jennifer Egan
 - o The Privileges by Jonathan Dee
 - The Surrendered by Chang-Rae Lee
- 2012: No award given.^[6]
 - o Train Dreams by Denis Johnson
 - Swamplandia! by Karen Russell
 - o The Pale King by David Foster Wallace (posthumous nominee)
- 2013: The Orphan Master's Son by Adam Johnson
 - o What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank by Nathan Englander
 - The Snow Child by Eowyn Ivey
- 2014: The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt
 - o The Son by Philipp Meyer
 - o The Woman Who Lost Her Soul by Bob Shacochis
- 2015: All the Light We Cannot See by Anthony Doerr
 - Let Me Be Frank with You by Richard Ford
 - o The Moor's Account by Laila Lalami
 - o Lovely, Dark, Deep by Joyce Carol Oates
 - 2016: The Sympathizer by Viet Thanh Nguyen[7]
 - Get in Trouble: Stories by Kelly Link
 - o Maud's Line by Margaret Verble
- 2017: The Underground Railroad by Colson Whitehead^[8]
 - o Imagine Me Gone by Adam Haslett
 - o The Sport of Kings by C. E. Morgan
- **2018:** *Less* by Andrew Sean Greer
 - o In the Distance by Hernan Diaz
 - o The Idiot by Elif Batuman
- **2019:** *The Overstory* by Richard Powers
 - o The Great Believers by Rebecca Makkai
 - o There There by Tommy Orange