

Literature Fellowships

The National Endowment for the Arts has provided direct support to literary writers since awarding its first grants in 1966. In 1967, at the encouragement of National Council on the Arts members Ralph Ellison, Paul Engle, Harper Lee, and John Steinbeck, a formal program was initiated to support creative writers. Twenty-three grants were awarded that first year, including grants to poet Mona van Duyn, a future U.S. Poet Laureate, and fiction writer Isaac Bashevis Singer, a future Nobel Laureate.

For many Literature Fellows, NEA support is crucial to affirming their vocation as a writer. Writer Julia Alvarez, who received an NEA Literature award in 1987, said, “Every year I’d send off my application for an NEA grant, hoping that this would be the year my work was recognized. When I got my NEA grant, I felt as if I was now included among the storytellers and poets of my new country!”

Although artistic merit always has been at the heart of the fellowship awards, today it is the sole basis on which the grants are given. Over several months, a diverse panel of readers, comprised of distinguished American writers and one knowledgeable layperson, read through the blind submissions. All applicants must be U.S. citizens. Panelists do not know the identities of the writers, their publishing histories, academic achievements, or previous awards. The highest ranked applications are recommended to the National Council on the Arts and the NEA Chairman as meriting an individual writing fellowship.

Overall, the National Endowment for the Arts has awarded \$40 million through its Literature Fellowships to more than 2,750 writers and translators. The record of the Literature Fellowships program shows unparalleled support for writers at critical, early stages of their careers; many have gone on to win major awards 10 to 20 years after receiving Arts Endowment support. NEA Literature Fellows include 20 U.S. Poets Laureate and have garnered six National Medal of Arts, five National Humanities Medals, 91 American Book Awards, 45 National Book Awards, and 41 Pulitzer Prizes.

This year's Literature Fellowships are for Poetry (Prose and Poetry fellowships are given in alternate years). Of the 1,590 applications received, 45 writers from 22 states and one living abroad were awarded \$20,000 grants, totaling \$900,000.

In addition to the creative writing fellowships, each year Literature Fellowships are awarded for translation of literary works written in foreign languages into English (alternating between prose and poetry to coincide with the creative writing fellowships). Unlike the creative writing fellowships, translation fellowships are awarded for specific projects. The art of literary translation facilitates the international exchange of fiction, poetry, and drama among cultures. Without translation, most Americans would not be able to enjoy Ovid, Anna Akhmatova, Marguerite Duras, or Orhan Pamuk. In 2005, 49 applications for Translation in Poetry grants were received, of which 14 translators in 10 states and one living abroad were awarded grants totaling \$200,000. Grants to translators are awarded in grants of either \$10,000 or \$20,000, depending on the translation project.

CREATIVE WRITING FELLOWSHIPS—POETRY:

(all grants are \$20,000)

Mary Adams is an associate professor of Writing at Western Carolina University. Her book, *Epistles from the Planet Photosynthesis*, was published by the University Press of Florida.

David Baker is the author or editor of ten books. He holds the Thomas B. Fordham Chair of English at Denison University and serves as Poetry Editor of *The Kenyon Review*.

Michael Blumenthal is the author of six books of poetry, most recently, *Dusty Angel*. Formerly Director of Creative Writing at Harvard, he is currently a visiting professor of

American Literature at the Université Jean-Monnet.

Allen Braden of Puyallup, Washington, has published poetry and prose in *The Southern Review*, *The Georgia Review*, and *Shenandoah*. He has also received an Artist Trust/Washington State Arts Commission Fellowship in Literary Arts.

Cyrus Cassells has won a Lannan Literary Award, a William Carlos Williams Award, a Pushcart Prize, and a Lambda Literary Award. He is the author of four books of poetry.

Robert Cording has published four books of poetry, most recently *Against Consolation*. He teaches at Holy Cross College in Worcester, Massachusetts.

James Daniels is the head of the Creative Writing Department at Carnegie Mellon University. His books include *M-80* and *Blessing This House*. He also edited the anthology *Letters to America: Contemporary American Poetry on Race*.

Jon Davis, Creative Writing Chair at the Institute of American Indian Arts, is the author of the screenplays *Gift of the Condor* and *Catamount Falls*, and a play, *Anna Without Angels*. His poems have appeared in *Luna* and *American Letters & Commentary*.

Sally Dawidoff's poetry has appeared in several literary journals including *Agni* and *Boston Review*. She currently teaches a poetry workshop at the City University of New York.

Ramola D holds an MFA in Poetry from George Mason University, and an MBA and a BS in Physics from the University of Madras, India. Her poetry has been twice nominated for Pushcart Prizes and appeared in *Best American Poetry 1994*.

Matthew Donovan received his MFA from New York University. The 2003 recipient of Vassar College's W. K. Rose Fellowship in the Arts, he is currently an assistant professor of Literature and Creative Writing at the College of Santa Fe.

B. H. Fairchild is the author of four books of poems. He is the recipient of Guggenheim and Rockefeller Fellowships, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the Bobbitt National Prize for Poetry.

Marlon Fick is an assistant professor of English at Kansas State University. He has translated the work of 20 Mexican poets for the anthology *The River is Wide*, and his honors include the Conaculta Award.

Kathleen Flenniken holds an MS degree in Civil Engineering. Her first collection, *Famous*, won the 2005 Prairie Schooner Book Prize in Poetry. She lives in Seattle.

Gregory Fraser currently teaches creative writing at the University of West Georgia. A two-time finalist for the Walt Whitman Award, Fraser also won the Walt McDonald Poetry Prize for his first book, *Strange Pietà*.

Alice Fulton is currently the Ann S. Bowers Professor of English at Cornell University. Her most recent book of poems was *Cascade Experiment*. She has received a Pushcart Prize, Bobbitt National

Prize for Poetry, and Guggenheim Fellowship.

Greg Glazner is a professor at the College of Santa Fe in New Mexico. He is the author of two books of poetry, *Singularity* and *From the Iron Chair*, which won the 1991 Walt Whitman Award.

James Harms is the author of five collections of poetry from Carnegie Mellon University Press. He also directs the MFA Program in Creative Writing at West Virginia University.

Terrance Hayes has won the Whiting Writers Award, the Kate Tufts Discovery Award, a National Poetry Series award, a Pushcart Prize, and a Best American Poetry selection. He teaches at Carnegie Mellon University.

Grey Held was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2002. His poems have appeared in *Slipstream*, *Sahara*, and the *Brooklyn Review*. He is the senior industry analyst for a research firm.

Jane Hirshfield's sixth book of poetry, *After*, was published in 2006. She has received Guggenheim and Rockefeller Fellowships as well as the Academy of American Poets Fellowship for Distinguished Writing.

Cathy Hong has been awarded a Van Lier Fellowship and a Pushcart Prize. Her poetry has appeared in the *Columbia Journal*, *Field*, *McSweeney's*, and *Mudfish*.

John Isles is the author of *ARK*. He has been awarded a Ruskin Art Club prize from the *Los Angeles Review*, and his work has appeared in *American Letters & Commentary*, *Boston Review*, and *Colorado Review*.

Tyehimba Jess's first book of poetry, *leadbelly*, was a winner of the 2004 National Poetry Series. Recognized as one of 2005's eighteen debut poets to watch by *Poets and Writers*, he teaches at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Kimberly Johnson holds graduate degrees from Johns Hopkins, the Iowa Writers' Workshop, and the University of California-Berkeley. Her work has appeared recently in *The New Yorker*, *The Southern Review*, and *Arion*. She lives in Salt Lake City.

Laura Kasischke is the author of three previous books of poetry, *Wild Brides*, *Housekeeping in a Dream*, and *Fire & Flower*, in addition to three novels. She lives in Chelsea, Michigan.

Sarah Kennedy is the author of four books of poems. She is the Book Review Editor for *Shenandoah* and teaches at Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia.

James Kimbrell has been the recipient of the Whiting Writers' Award, the Ruth Lilly Fellowship, the "Discovery"/The Nation Award, a Ford Foundation Fellowship, and has twice received the Academy of American Poets Prize. His latest book of poems is *My Psychic*.

Karen An-hwei Lee's first book-length collection, *In Medias Res*, won the Kathryn A. Morton Prize and the Norma Farber First Book Award. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing and a doctorate in Literature.

Alex Lemon is the assistant editor of *Luna: A Journal of Poetry and Translation* and teaches at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. His translations of contemporary Chinese poets have appeared in *Tin House* and *New American Writing*.

Robert Hill Long helped found the North Carolina Writers' Network in 1984. His work has been anthologized in *Best American Poetry*, *Flash Fiction*, and *The Best of the Prose Poem*.

Ted Mathys is the author of *Forge*. His poems have appeared in *Chelsea*, *Colorado Review*, and *Verse*. Originally from Ohio, he currently lives in Manhattan.

Jill McDonough has been a fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center and the Boston Athenaeum and teaches writing in Massachusetts universities and prisons. Her poems have been published in *Poetry*, *Harvard Review*, and *Slate*.

Eric Pankey is the author of seven collections of poetry, most recently *Oracle Figures and Reliquaries*. He teaches in the MFA Program at George Mason University.

Kathleen Peirce's work has won her the AWP Award, the Iowa Prize, the William Carlos Williams Award, and a fellowship from the Whiting Foundation. She teaches in Texas State University's MFA Program.

Belle Randall is the author of *One Hundred and One Different Ways of Playing Solitaire*. Her poems and essays have appeared in *Poetry*, *The Threepenny Review*, and *TriQuarterly*.

For fertility, a new bride is lifted to touch it with her left hand,
or possibly kiss it.
The sound close in, my friend told me later, is almost silent.

At ten kilometers, even those who have never heard it know what it is.

If you stand near during thunder, she said,
you will hear a reply.

Six weeks and six days from the phone's small ringing,
replying was over.

She who cooked lamb and loved wine and wild mushroom pastas.
She who when I saw her last was silent as the great Zygmunt mostly is,
a ventilator's clapper between her dry lips.

Because I could, I spoke. She laid her palm on my cheek to answer.
And soon again, to say it was time to leave.

I put my lips near the place a tube went into
the back of one hand.
The kiss—as if it knew what I did not yet—both full and formal.

As one would kiss the ring of a cardinal, or the rim
of that cold iron bell, whose speech can mean "Great joy,"
or—equally—"The city is burning. Come."

"THE BELL ZYGMUNT" BY JANE HIRSHFIELD
from *After* (HarperCollins, 2006)

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Spencer Reece is the recipient of the Eighth Annual Levis Reading Prize for his collection of poetry *The Clerk's Tale*. He is an assistant manager at Brooks Brothers in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida.

Richard Siken won the Yale Series of Younger Poets Prize for his book *Crush*. He is also the founder of the literary magazine *spork*. He lives in Tucson, Arizona.

Sean Singer was born in Guadalajara, Mexico, and currently lives in New York City. His first book *Discography* won the 2001 Yale

Series of Younger Poets Prize and the Norma Farber First Book Award.

Young Smith is an assistant professor of English at Eastern Kentucky University. His poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *Pleiades*, and *Crazyhorse*.

Mark Smith-Soto received his doctorate in Comparative Literature from the University of California at Berkeley. His full-length collection, *Our Lives are Rivers*, was published in 2003.

Michael Teig earned his MFA in Creative Writing from the University

of Massachusetts, where he studied with the late Agha Shahid Ali. He also founded the literary magazine *Jubilat*. His book, *Big Back Yard*, won the 2002 A. Poulin Jr. Poetry Prize.

Jeffrey Thomson has published three collections, most recently *The Country of Lost Sons*. His work has won the Academy of American Poets Prize on three occasions. He directs the MFA in Writing Program at Chatham College.

Mark Wunderlich is the author of *Voluntary Servitude* and *The Anchorage*, which won the Lambda Literary Award. He is currently a professor of Literature at Bennington College in Vermont.

Kevin Young's work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times Book Review*, *The Paris Review*, and *The Kenyon Review*. He teaches at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

TRANSLATION PROJECTS IN POETRY:

John J. Balcom

Monterey, CA • \$10,000

To support the translation from Chinese of selected poems by Lo Fu. Born in China's Hunan Province, Lo Fu served in the military during the Sino-Japanese War (1939-45), began writing poetry in the 1940s, and moved to Taiwan in 1949. His 12 volumes of poetry have received major literary awards in Taiwan, including the China Times Literary Award and the National Literary Award.

John Balcom is an associate professor at the Monterey Institute. His translations include *Death of a Stone Cell* by Lo Fu, *The Four Seasons* by Xiang Yang, *My Village* by Wu Sheng, and *Black and White* by Lin Hengtai.

Wayne Cox

Greenville, SC • \$10,000

To support the translation from Catalan of selected poems by Miquel Martí i Pol (1929-2003). Cox will collaborate with his wife, Lourdes Manyé i Martí. One of the most widely read poets in contemporary Catalan literature, Martí i Pol was awarded the Gold Medal for Excellence in Fine Arts from the Spanish Ministry of Culture in 1992, and was nominated for the Nobel Prize for literature in 2000.

An associate professor at Anderson College, Wayne Cox translated *Vacation Notebook* with his wife in 1995. It remains the only volume of Martí i Pol's poetry available in English.

Aaron Crippen

Houston, TX • \$10,000

To support the translation from Chinese of selected poems by Gu Cheng (1956-1993). Gu Cheng is one of the most important voices to emerge from China's Cultural Revolution. He arrived on the literary scene during the Democracy Wall movement of 1979, publishing in Communist China's first underground magazine, *Today*.

Currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Houston, Aaron Crippen has published numerous translations in such journals as *Northwest Quarterly*, *Oklahoma*

Review, *Nimrod*, *Mid-American Review*, and *Manoa*.

Marjolijn de Jager

Stamford, CT • \$10,000

To support the translation from Dutch of *The School by the Sea* by Huub Beursken (1950-). Beursken is a painter, translator, critic, and writer. *The School by the Sea*, a recent work, shows the influence of American poet William Carlos Williams and Beursken's interest in the visual arts.

Born in Borneo, Indonesia, when the nation was still a colony of The Netherlands (the Dutch East Indies), Marjolijn de Jager grew up with Dutch as her first language. She spent her adolescent years in Amsterdam and immigrated to the U.S. in 1958. She currently teaches Dutch at New York University's School of Continuing and Professional Studies.

Leonard Fox

Charleston, SC • \$20,000

To support the translation from Malagasy of Jean-Joseph Rabearivelo's *Almost Dreams* (1934), *Translated from the Night* (1935), and from French of his *Old Songs from the Imerina Lands*, a collection of translations and adaptations of traditional Malagasy oral poetry (published posthumously, 1939). Considered the most important 20th-century poet of Madagascar, Rabearivelo wrote in both Malagasy and French.

Leonard Fox works as an independent translator for publishers and other private clients throughout the U.S. His translations include *Hainteny: The*

Traditional Poetry of Madagascar, the first study in English of Malagasy traditional poetry.

Kent L. Johnson

Freeport, IL • \$10,000

To support the translation from *Spanish of The Night*, a book-length poem by Bolivian writer Jaime Saenz (1921-1986). Johnson will collaborate with Forrest Gander. Published in 1984, *The Night* was Saenz's last poem, composed of four parts touching on the themes of alcoholism, identity, and Bolivian history.

Kent Johnson currently teaches at Highland Community College. His translations include *Immanent Visitor: Selected Poems of Jaime Saenz*, published in 2002.

Kerry Shawn Keys

Boiling Springs, PA • \$20,000

To support the translation from Lithuanian of a book-length selection of poetry by Laurynas Katkus. In addition to newer pieces, many of the poems included will be from two previously untranslated books, *Voices, Notes* (1998) and *Diving Lessons* (2003).

Kerry Shawn Keys is a widely published translator and author who divides his time between Pennsylvania and Lithuania. He has published numerous books and anthologies of both poetry and prose, and his work has appeared in many American and international journals and magazines.

Janet Lembke

Stauton, VA • \$20,000

To support the retranslation from

Latin of Virgil's four-book *Georgics*. Virgil's *Georgics*, the second of his three poetic works, comprises 2,172 lines of Latin hexameters on farming. This project will add a new translation in American English with the goal of reaching general readers interested in poetry and ancient history, as well as gardening and farming.

Janet Lembke is a writer, translator, and naturalist. Her translations include Euripides's *Electra and Hecuba*, Aeschylus's *Persians and Suppliants*, and *Bronze and Iron: Old Latin Poetry from Its Beginnings to 100 B.C.*

Bill Porter (Red Pine)

Port Townsend, WA • \$10,000

To support the translation from classical Chinese of the poetry of Wei Ying-wu. Born in 737, Wei Ying-wu is recognized as one of the great poets of the T'ang period, especially in terms of his ability to describe landscapes and natural settings, and to conjure the moods of seclusion and serenity. This project renders into English about one-third (150-200) of his surviving poems.

Bill Porter, who writes under the pseudonym Red Pine, first began translating Chinese poetry in 1973, while living in a Buddhist monastery in Taiwan. The author of numerous translations, his most recent anthology of China's best-known T'ang and Sung poetry, *Poems of the Masters*, was published in 2003. Over the years, he has received many honors for his work and has produced more than one thousand radio programs about Chinese culture.

Martha Ann Selby

Cambridge, MA • \$20,000

To support the retranslation from classical Tamil of *Ainkurunuru*, a fourth-century anthology of love poems. The *Ainkurunuru* contains the work of five poets, each of whom composed 100 poems devoted to one of five "landscapes" of reciprocal love (jealous quarreling, tortured separation and lament, clandestine love, abject separation, and domestic bliss). Only one complete translation of the text has been published in English, and it is marred by inaccuracies and outdated usages.

Martha Ann Selby is an associate professor of Asian Studies at the University of Texas at Austin. Her previous translations include *Grow Long, Blessed Night: Love Poems from Classical India* and *A Circle of Six Seasons: Old Tamil, Prakrit, and Sanskrit Verse*.

Andrew Shields

Switzerland, FO • \$20,000

To support the translation from French of selected poems by Jacques Réda. Born in Luneville, France, in 1929, Réda currently lives in Paris. This project includes poems from nine volumes published since 1968. No English volume of his work is currently in print.

Since receiving his PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Pennsylvania in 1995, Andrew Shields has been an English language teacher in Switzerland. An accomplished translator of both French and German, he has had his work published in journals such as *Poetry*, *Marlboro Review*, and *Grand Street*.

Adam Sorkin

Havertown, PA • \$10,000

To support the translation from Romanian of Magda Cârneci's book of poems, *Chaosmos*. Born in 1955, Cârneci is a widely respected poet, essayist, and art critic. *Chaosmos* (combining chaos and cosmos) was originally published in 1992 and was seen as a breakthrough work in its introduction of elements of daily life into poetic language.

Adam Sorkin is Distinguished Professor of English at Pennsylvania State University, Delaware County, where he has taught since 1978. He has translated more than 135 contemporary Romanian poets and published 19 books.

Steven Stewart

Reno, NV • \$10,000

To support the translation from Spanish of Angel Crespo's *Poemas en Prosa 1965-1994*. In the 1940s, Crespo co-founded the Postism movement in Spain, which emphasized imaginative play on language, and has had far-reaching influence on contemporary Spanish poetry.

Steven Stewart teaches in the English Department at the University of Nevada, Reno. He holds his PhD in Creative Writing from Florida State University, and his translations have appeared in numerous journals and magazines including *Harper's*, *Crazyhorse*, and *jubilat*. His book of translations of the work of Rafael Perez Estrada, *Devoured by the Moon*, was recently published by Hanging Loose Press.

Virlana Tkacz

New York, NY • \$20,000

To support the translation from Ukrainian of Serhiy Zhadan's two most recent books of poetry. Tkacz will collaborate with Wanda Phipps. Born in 1974, Zhadan is one of the most popular poets of the post-independence generation in Ukraine.

*The green river water
slows in warm bends
fish zeppelins
scatter the plankton
and tired bird catchers
attempt to catch
every word.*

Hold on to
the brightly colored rags and scotch tape
that bind the slashed wrists
of these heroic times.
One day you will turn off this radio,
you'll get used to her,
to her breathing
and, dressed in your T-shirt,
she'll bring you water in the middle of the night.

On the terrace the left-over cups of tea,
are filling up with rain water
and cigarette butts,
you and I share a cold
you and I share long conversations—
you don't notice the morning rain
you go to sleep late
and you wake up late
I write poems about how I love
this woman and I invent
newer and newer words
to avoid
telling her.

"ALCOHOL" BY SERHIY ZHADAN

Translated from Ukrainian by Virlana Tkacz and Wanda Phipps
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Virlana Tkacz is a translator, writer, and theater director, and currently serves as the artistic director of Yara Arts Group, a resident company at La MaMa Experimental Theatre. With her long-time collaborator, Phipps, she has translated Ukrainian poetry of more than 20 poets, and they received the National Theatre Translation Fund Award for their translation of Lesia Ukrainka's verse drama *The Forest Song*.