

Literature Fellowships

Most writers must earn their living from means other than creative writing. To find time to compose, they grab a half an hour at lunch, wake up an hour before the rest of the family, take notes on the subway ride home. If they are lucky, they find enough time to research, write, and complete a book.

The National Endowment for the Arts offers Literature Fellowships to help alleviate the financial and time pressures and to allow writers and translators valuable creative time away from their daily jobs. At the same time, the Literature Fellowships provide national recognition—often for the first time—to writers. As poet and fiction writer Sandra Cisneros stated, the Literature Fellowship “verified I was indeed valuable, what I did mattered, not just to myself and to a few friends, but to strangers who had judged my work extraordinary....that validation meant more to me than the money.”

Overall, the National Endowment for the Arts has awarded \$40 million through its Literature Fellowships to more than 2,475 writers. The record of the Literature Fellowships program shows unparalleled support for writers at critical, early stages of their careers. Since 1990, 42 of the 60 recipients of the National Book Award, Pulitzer Prize, and National Book Critics Circle Award in Poetry and Fiction have received NEA Literature Fellowships, often 10 to 20 years earlier.

This year's Literature Fellowships are for Prose (Prose and Poetry fellowships are given in alternate years). Of the 1,422 applications received, 42 writers from 22 states were awarded \$20,000 grants, totaling \$840,000. Literature Fellowships are awarded through a process of anonymous manuscript review under the sole criterion of artistic excellence and merit. Panelists do not know the identities of the writers, their publishing histories, academic achievements, or previous awards.

In addition to the creative writing fellowships, each year Literature Fellowships are awarded for translation projects to translate literary works written in foreign languages into English (alternating between prose and poetry to coincide with the creative writing fellowships). The art of literary translation facilitates the international exchange of fiction, poetry, and drama between cultures; many books cherished by Americans are experienced primarily in translation. Without translation, most Americans would not be able to enjoy Homer, Leo Tolstoy, Italo Calvino, or Pablo Neruda. In 2004, 60 applications for Translation in Prose grants were received, of which 11 translators in nine states were awarded grants totaling \$160,000. Grants to translators are awarded for specific translation projects in grants of either \$10,000 or \$20,000.

CREATIVE WRITING FELLOWSHIPS—PROSE:

(all grants are \$20,000)

Jennifer Ackerman's most recent book, published by Houghton Mifflin, *Chance in the House of Fate* was released in 2001. Her first collection of essays, *Notes from the Shore*, was published in 1995.

Julene Bair's collection of essays, *One Degree West*, details her childhood. Her work has also been anthologized by Milkweed Editions.

A recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, **Peter Balakian** teaches at Colgate University. His memoir, *Black Dog of Fate*, was published in 1997.

Tom Barbash has written three novels, with the most recent, *The Last Good Chance*, having been published by Picador. He is a lecturer at Stanford University and a former recipient of a Wallace Stegner Fellowship.

Judy Blunt is an assistant professor at the University of Montana. Her book, *Breaking Clean*, was published by Alfred A. Knopf in 2002.

Carrie Brown has had four books published by Algonquin Books. She is a visiting assistant professor at Sweet Briar College.

Bo Caldwell is a freelance writer based in Cupertino, California. A recipient of a Wallace Stegner Fellowship, her novel *The Distant Land of My Father* was published in 2001.

A graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, **Alexander Chee** lives in Brooklyn, New York, and is a visiting writer at Wesleyan University. His novel, *Edinburgh*, was published in 2001.

Bernard Cooper is an art critic for *Los Angeles Magazine*. A recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship for Creative Nonfiction, his book, *Truth Serum*, was published in 1996.

Justin Cronin's novel *Mary and O'Neil* was published by the Dial Press. He received a PEW Fellowship and earned his MFA from the University of Iowa.

Ann Darby is the author of the novel *The Orphan Game*, published by William Morrow in 1999. Her short fiction has appeared in *The Northwest Review*, *The Malahat Review*, and *The Best of Story Quarterly*, among other journals.

James DeVita is an actor in Wisconsin. His first novel, *Blue*, was published in 2001 by HarperCollins.

Carolyn Ferrell teaches at Sarah Lawrence College. Her first collection of stories, *Don't Erase Me*, was published in 1997.

Cristina Garcia was a finalist for the National Book Award in 1992. Her novels include *The Agüero Sisters*, published in 1997, and *Dreaming in Cuban*, published in 1992.

“FROM HIS POCKET, CHEN PAN PULLED out what was left of the sky-blue dressing gown that had belonged to his wife. The gown was in tatters, the neckline torn, but he wrapped the fragment around his wrist. For ten years the nightgown had held Lucrecia’s original scent—a peppermint and sea-salt odor—before it had gotten musty with old tears. It was true that his love for Lucrecia had grown with each passing year. Chen Pan was astonished at its persistence. Who was it that said: If only one person in the world knows me, then I will have no regrets. So why was he so regretful?”

Chen Pan imagined taking a small blue boat and sailing it beyond the rim of the horizon, beyond the slowly rising sun to where he knew Lucrecia’s spirit rested. Last March, he’d bought a revolver and polished it every day. He couldn’t decide whether to go on living or simply shoot himself. Sometimes he spun the revolver on the nightstand or on the counter of his shop, waiting for it to stop and point at him directly. It never did.

What did it mean to die, anyway? What if there wasn’t a shred of truth to anything he’d learned? After all, who had ever returned from the beyond to inform the living?

Chen Pan marveled at the optimism of others in the face of death. Their insistence on pasting paper money everywhere. Or burying their loved ones in three coffins, one inside the other. Or inserting bits of mercury-dipped jade into the orifices of the deceased to delay their decay. What if death was no more or less than this: the *kapling* of a broken string? Each time Chen Pan thought about this, he felt as if each hair on his head were on fire. //

CRISTINA GARCIA

Excerpt from *Monkey Hunting*, Knopf, 2003
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Julia Glass won the National Book Award for Fiction in 2002 for her first novel *Three Junes*, published by Pantheon Books.

T. Greenwood is the author of three novels, *Undressing the Moon*, *Nearer Than the Sky*, and *Breathing Water*, all published by St. Martin’s Press.

Michael Griffith is a teacher at the University of Cincinnati. His novel, *Spikes*, was published in 2001.

Joshua Harmon received his MFA from Cornell University. His fiction has appeared in such journals as *Witness*, *AGNI*, *Antioch Review*, *Iowa Review*, and *Bomb*.

Noy Holland teaches at the University of Massachusetts. Her work has appeared in *Conjunctions*, *The American Voice*, and *Open City*. She was nominated for a National Book Award for her book, *The Spectacle of the Body*.

Karl Iagnemma is a research scientist for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His fiction has appeared in *The Paris Review*, *Zoetrope: All Story*, and in *The Best American Short Stories 2002*.

Wayne Karlin has published several novels with Curbstone Press, including *The Wished-For Country* and *Prisoners*. He has won one prior NEA Literature Fellowship and teaches at the College of Southern Maryland.

Charles Kemnitz teaches at the Penn College of Technology. His writing has appeared in *Cimarron Review*, *New Millennium*, *Northwest Review*, and *River Teeth*.

Ivonne Lamazares teaches Creative Writing at the University of Central Florida. Her first novel, *The Sugar Island*, was published by Houghton Mifflin in 2000.

Dorene O'Brien's work has appeared in *The MacGuffin*, *Margin*, and *New Millennium Writings*. She teaches at Wayne State University.

Julie Orringer's fiction has appeared in *The Paris Review*, *Ploughshares*, *The Yale Review*, and *Zoetrope: All Story*. Her stories are collected in *How To Breathe Underwater*.

Michael Parker is a professor at UNC-Greensboro. His most recent novel is *Towns Without Rivers*, published in 2001.

A teacher at William Paterson University, **John Parras's** fiction has appeared in *Gulf Stream Magazine*, *Oasis*, and *Hanging Loose*. He earned his PhD from Columbia University.

Alexander Parsons is an assistant professor at The University of New Hampshire. His novel, *Leaving Disneyland*, was published by St. Martin's Press in 2001.

Roy Parvin lives and writes in California. His most recent novel is *In The Snow Forest*.

J. Mark Powell's first novel, *Prodigals*, was published by the University of Tennessee Press in 2002. He is a visiting professor at the University of South Carolina.

John Price received his MFA in Nonfiction Writing from the University of Iowa. His work has appeared in *Creative Nonfiction*, *Orion*, and *The Florida Review*.

Lia Purpura is writer-in-residence at Loyola College. Her first collection of essays, *Increase*, was published by the University of Georgia Press.

Jess Row is the author of the short story collection *The Train to Lo Wu* and has published fiction in *Ploughshares*, *Ontario Review*, *Harvard Review*, and *Washington Square*.

Jim Ruland lives and writes in California. His fiction has appeared in *Exquisite Corpse*, *Sweet Fancy Moses*, and *Pindelyboz*.

Scott Russell Sanders has won fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the Lilly Endowment, and received one prior NEA Literature Fellowship. His books include *The Force of Spirit*, *Hunting for Hope*, and *Staying Put*.

Dashka Slater's first novel, *The Wishing Box*, was published by Chronicle Books in 2000. She lives and writes in Oakland, California.

Lauren Slater has a master's degree in psychology from Harvard University and a doctorate from Boston University. Her work was chosen for *The Best American Essays* of 1994 and 1997. Her most recent book, published by Random House, is *Love Works Like This*.

Dao Strom lives and writes in Austin, Texas. She received her MFA from the University of Iowa. Her first novel, *Grass Roof, Tin Roof*, was published in 2003.

Jonathan Waterman is the author of two books, *Arctic Crossing* and *A Most Hostile Mountain*. He lives in Colorado.

Larry Watson has received one prior NEA Literature Fellowship. His novels include *Laura*, *Montana 1948*, and *White Crosses*. He holds an honorary Doctor of Letters from Ripon College.

Brad Watson was a finalist for the National Book Award for his novel *The Heaven of Mercury*. He also has a collection of stories entitled *Last Days of the Dog-Men*.

Andrew Winer is a lecturer at the University of California-Irvine, where he also received his MFA in Fiction Writing. His novel, *The Color Midnight Made*, was published in 2002.

TRANSLATION FELLOWSHIPS—PROSE:

Alison Anderson \$10,000
To support the translation from French of the work of Christian Bobin. Anderson will translate several works, including *Une petite robe de fête*, a collection of short pieces ranging in themes from nostalgia for lost love to the experience of readers and unpublished writers.

Alison Anderson's translations include *Let Me Survive* by Louise Longo, *Onitsha* by JMG Le Clézio, and *History of the Surrealist Movement* by Gérard Durozoi.

Danuta Borchardt \$20,000
To support the retranslation from Polish of the novel *Cosmos* by Witold Gombrowicz. Born in Poland in 1904, Gombrowicz is the author of six books of fiction and three plays, which use classical models of farce and the grotesque to convey larger ideas of the times. Previous

translations of *Cosmos* were done from French and German translations, and this will be the first taken directly into English from Polish.

Danuta Borchardt was born in Poland and lived in England and Ireland before she moved to Boston in 1959 to work as a psychiatrist at Massachusetts General Hospital. She won the 2001 National Translation Award from the American Literary Translators Association for her translation of Gombrowicz's novel *Ferdydurke*.

Peter Constantine \$20,000

To support the translation from Greek of selected works by Alexandros Papadiamantis, Greece's foremost 19th-century prose writer. Papadiamantis (1851-1911) wrote more than 200 novellas and short stories, and numerous novels including his most famous work, *The Murderess*.

Peter Constantine is the translator of *Six Early Stories* by Thomas Mann, *The Undiscovered Chekhov - Thirty-Eight New Stories*, and *The Complete Works of Isaac Babel*. He currently is a senior editor for the journal *Conjunctions*.

Erdag Gökner \$20,000

To support the translation from Turkish of the novel *A Mind at Peace* by Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901-1962). A noted novelist, poet, and essayist, Tanpınar is considered the founder of modernist Turkish literature.

“**I**STANBUL, AUGUST 1939– MÜMTAZ HADN'T been out on the streets of the city properly since his cousin Ihsan, whom he called his “older brother,” had taken ill. Aside from errands like calling for the doctor, having prescriptions filled at the pharmacist's, and making phone calls from the neighbor's house, he'd spent almost the entire week either at his sick cousin's bedside, in his own room reading and reflecting, or attempting to comfort his niece and nephew. For about two days, Ihsan had complained of fever, back aches, and fatigue before pneumonia suddenly announced itself in the house in all its eminence, establishing its sultanate, a psychology of devastation through worry, anguish, sorrow, and the good wishes that never left one's lips or glances.

Everyone slept and woke with the angst that came with Ihsan's illness.

In the morning Mümtaz again awoke to this dread from a sleep that train whistles had bloodied with altogether different fears. It was approaching nine. He sat at the edge of his bed and thought for a while. He had a host of things to do today. The doctor had said he would come at ten – but Mümtaz wasn't obliged to wait for him. First of all, he needed to hire a nurse. Given that neither Ihsan's wife, Majideh, nor his mother, Sabireh Hanım, ever stepped away from the sickbed, the two children were a shambles.

The old servant Arifeh Hanım could more or less occupy Ahmet. But someone had to fully engage his younger sister Sabiha. More than anything else, she needed someone to talk to. As Mümtaz thought about this, he smiled inside at the antics of his little niece. It dawned on him that his affections for his young relative had taken on new proportions since he'd returned home: “I wonder, is it always a matter of habit? Do we always end up loving those closest to us?” he thought. //

AHMET HAMDI TANPINAR

Excerpt from *A Mind at Peace*

Translated from Turkish by
ERDAG GÖKNAR

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Erdag Göknaar currently is Visiting Assistant Professor of Turkish Language and Culture at Duke University. His translations include Orhan Pamuk's *Earth and Ashes* and *My Name is Red*.

Howard C. Goldblatt \$20,000

To support the translation from Chinese of the novel *My Life as Emperor* by Su Tong. Born in 1963, Su Tong is the author of six novels, short stories, and a novella, *Raise the Red Lantern*.

Howard Goldblatt currently is a research professor at University of Notre Dame. He has translated more than 25 books of Chinese literature, including Liu Heng's *Black Snow* and Chu Tien-wen's *Notes of a Decadent Man*.

Prasenjit Gupta \$10,000

To support the translation of a selection of short stories of Bengali writer Ashapura Debi. Widely regarded as one of India's leading literary figures, Ashapura Debi (1909-1995) explored the lives of Bengali society's middle class.

Prasenjit Gupta's translations have appeared in *Modern Poetry in Translation*, *Exchanges*, and *Indian Literature*. He won the Katha-British Council Contest in Translation in 1997.

Clifford E. Landers \$10,000

To support the translation from Portuguese of a selection of short stories by Brazilian writer Rubem Fonseca. Often focusing on alienation and victimization in Brazilian society, Fonseca's oeuvre includes more than 100 short stories.

Clifford E. Landers has translated 14 novels, including two novels by Fonseca, *Bufo & Spallanzani* and *The Lost Manuscript*, as well as Marcos Rey's *Memoirs of a Gigolo*, Jorge Amado's *The Golden Harvest*, and Paulo Coelho's *The Fifth Mountain*.

Tiina K. Nunnally \$20,000

To support the translation from Norwegian of Sigrid Undset's first novel, *Mrs. Marta Oulie*, and a selection of short stories written prior to 1918. Winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1928, Sigrid Undset is best known for her medieval trilogy *Kristin Lavransdatter*.

Tiina Nunnally is executive editor of Fjord Press. She has translated such works as Undset's novel *Jenny* and the trilogy of novels comprising *Kristin Lavransdatter*, and Peter Høeg's *Smilla's Sense of Snow*.

Robert Rudder \$10,000

To support the translation from Spanish of the novel *Lo prohibido* by Benito Pérez Galdós. Robert Rudder will collaborate with Gloria Arjona. Born in 1843, Galdós wrote 77 novels, 21 works for the theater, and several volumes of literary criticism and personal essays, placing him second only to Cervantes among Spain's greatest novelists.

Robert Rudder's translations include Galdós's *Nazarin*, Rosario Castellanos's *City of Kings*, Francisco Rojas Gonzalez's *Medicine Man*, and Cristina Peri Rossi's *Solitaire of Love*.

Laima Sruoginis \$10,000

To support the translation from Lithuanian of personal essays, a memoir, and fiction by Vanda Juknaite. Born in 1949 in a remote village along the Lithuanian/Latvian border, Juknaite received the Lithuanian National Prize for Literature in 2002.

Laima Sruoginis published the anthology, *The Earth Remains: An Anthology of Contemporary Lithuanian Prose*, in 2003. She currently teaches at the University of Southern Maine.

Alyson Waters \$20,000

To support the translation from French of Vassilis Alexakis's most recent novel, *Foreign Words*. Born and raised in Greece, Alexakis writes much of his work in French, having moved to Paris in his twenties. His fiction employs elements of his life to explore the relationship between identity and language, memory and the self, and exile, loss, love, and death.

Alyson Waters is currently the managing editor of Yale French Studies and a lecturer in the French Department at Yale University. Her translations include Tzvetan Todorov's *The Morals of History*.