



THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS' TRANSLATION PRIZES 2024

BRITISH LIBRARY & ONLINE
WEDNESDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2025

The Society of Authors (SoA) promotes and supports eleven translation prizes, eight of which are presented tonight. It is the UK trade union for more than 12,400 writers, illustrators and literary translators, at all stages of their careers, and has been advising individuals and speaking out for the profession since 1884. It administers many other prizes including the Society of Authors' Awards, the ALCS Educational Writers' Award, the Ilse Schwepcke Prize, and the Sunday Times Charlotte Aitken Trust Young Writer of the Year Award.

The Translators Association (TA) advocates for the rights and interests of the SoA's 800+ literary translators and represents all genres and stages of professional development. The TA co-programmes the Literary Translation Centre at the London Book Fair and actively engages with the wider translation community. Current initiatives include a focus on readers reports and making the sector more inclusive and transparent.

Hawthornden Foundation is a private charitable foundation supporting contemporary writers and the literary arts. Established by Drue Heinz, the noted philanthropist and patron of the arts, the Foundation is named after Hawthornden Castle in Midlothian, Scotland, where an international residential residency program provides month-long retreats for creative writers from all disciplines to work in peaceful surroundings.

We thank the **British Library** for their continued support of the Translation Prizes and hosting the event. The British Library, a Grade I listed building, is the national library of the United Kingdom and the second largest library in the world by number of items catalogued.

Ian Giles is a translator of the Scandinavian languages into English and the current Chair of the Translators Association.

Booklet design by Natalie Thorpe.

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Wednesday 12 February 2025
British Library & online
Presented by Ian Giles

For further information:
 Email: prizes@societyofauthors.org
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 #TranslationPrizes

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The John Florio Prize
 for translation from Italian

The Premio Valle Inclán
 for translation from Spanish

The Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize
 for translation from Arabic

The TA First Translation Prize
 for debut translation from any language

The Schlegel-Tieck Prize
 for translation from German

Introducing the John Calder Translation Prize
 for translations from any language

The Scott Moncrieff Prize
 for translation from French

The Vondel Translation Prize
 for translation from Dutch

The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation Translation Prize
 for translation from Japanese

Nederlands
 letterenfonds
 dutch foundation
 for literature



THE JOHN FLORIO PRIZE FOR A TRANSLATION FROM ITALIAN

Winner

Jenny McPhee for a translation of *Lies and Sorcery* by Elsa Morante (New York Review Books Classics)

'Jenny McPhee's magnificent translation, it reads like a precursor of magical realism, although the searing realism with which its characters are depicted, and the web of lies in which they are caught, holds at bay any consolatory magic. It is one of the great novels of the second half of the twentieth century, an astonishing debut, and McPhee's patient and imaginative translation fully honours the original.'
– Jamie McKendrick

Jenny McPhee is a translator and the author of *The Center of Things*, *No Ordinary Matter*, and *A Man of No Moon*. She teaches literary translation and creative writing at NYU and Princeton.

Runner-up

Brian Robert Moore for a translation of *A Silence Shared* by Lalla Romano (Pushkin Press)

'A masterclass in delivering characters that stay with the reader, whilst obscuring them just enough to keep you intrigued long after the book is done. This was a worthy advocate for either top spot.'
– Maame Blue

Shortlisted

John Cullen and **Gregory Conti** for a translation of *The Colour Line* by Igiaba Scego (HopeRoad Publishing)

Leah Janeczko for a translation of *Lost on Me* by Veronica Raimo (Virago)

Judges

Maame Blue
Jamie McKendrick
Sandra Silipo

Sponsors

The Italian Cultural Institute in London, an official body of the Italian state, has the objective of promoting and spreading the Italian language and culture in England and Wales through the organization of cultural events to encourage the circulation of ideas, the arts and of the sciences.

'These writers, and their translators, tell us very different stories with a common denominator: Italy – its people, culture and history. However, these books also explore – sometimes with humour, sometimes with compassion – a range of universal human conditions: solitude and companionship, desperation and resilience, slavery and freedom. We hope that, by receiving this extra lease of life, these works will have the opportunity to touch and inspire many readers around the world.'

– Sandra Silipo



THE PREMIO VALLE INCLÁN FOR A TRANSLATION FROM SPANISH

Winner

Chris Andrews, Edith Grossman and Alastair Reid for a translation of *Maqroll's Prayer and Other Poems* by Álvaro Mutis (New York Review Books Poets)

'Chris Andrews, Edith Grossman, and Alastair Reid's much needed translation [...] provides a fascinating example of the impressive scope of abilities of this collaborative team of translators. This volume provides a spectacular sample of the variety of form in Mutis' poetry, ranging from the more traditional Spanish poetic structures to the most experimental poetry and prose poems of this author. This volume is a masterful example of collaboration in translation, and it reveals a deep and intimate understanding of Mutis' complex work.'

– Dr Valentina Aparicio

Chris Andrews translates prose fiction and poetry from Spanish and French. He has translated books by Kaouther Adimi, César Aira, Selva Almada, Roberto Bolaño, Marcelo Cohen, Liliana Colanzi and Ágota Kristóf, among others. He is also the author of *How to Do Things with Forms* and *The Oblong Plot*. He lives on Wangal land in Australia.

Edith Grossman (1936-2023) was an award-winning translator of poetry and prose by contemporary Spanish-language writers. In 2006 she was awarded the PEN/Ralph Manheim Medal for Translation.

Alastair Reid (1926-2014) was a poet, prose chronicler, translator, and traveller. Born in Scotland, he came to the United States in the early 1950s. He was a constant translator of poetry from the Spanish languages and [...] published more than 40 books.

Runner-up

Kit Maude for a translation of *Cousins* by Aurora Venturini (Faber)

'This translation presents the beauty hidden in certain structure, sharpness and direct-indirectness. It managed to be loyal to the original while also showing its feathery wings.'

– Gaby Sambuccetti

Shortlisted

Chris Andrews for a translation of *You Glow in the Dark* by Liliana Colanzi (New Directions)

Clayton Lehmann and Ángela Helmer for a translation of *Francisco López de Gómara's General History of the Indies* by Francisco López de Gómara (University Press of Colorado)

Christina MacSweeney for a translation of *Fury* by Clio Mendoza (Seven Stories Press UK)

Judges

Dr Valentina Aparicio
Gaby Sambuccetti
Gerard Woodward

'The selection shows a range of excellent translation work that is being done at both established and independent publishing houses today, covering from archival work on Spanish Early Modern chronicles to contemporary Latin American weird narratives. The works on this shortlist reveal the versatility of these skilled translators, who have brought to English-language readers volumes that are truly worthy of being made accessible to wider global audience.'

– Dr Valentina Aparicio



THE SAIF GHOBASH BANIPAL PRIZE FOR A TRANSLATION FROM ARABIC

Winner

Katharine Halls for a translation of *Rotten Evidence* by Ahmed Naji (McSweeney's)

'*Rotten Evidence charts Ahmed Naji's journey through the courts and prison in a narrative that mixes details of his life and his case with the reality of prison and oppression in Egypt. He also meditates on a wide range of topics including prison literature and libraries, sexual vocabulary in Arabic, and his childhood experiences as son of a leading figure in the local branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. Katharine Hall's wonderful translation captures the emotional range of the book which ranges from blackest humour to blackest despair.*

– The Banipal Prize judges

Katharine Halls is an Arabic-to-English translator from Cardiff, Wales. Her critically acclaimed translation of Ahmed Naji's prison memoir *Rotten Evidence* was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award for autobiography, she was awarded a 2021 PEN/Heim Translation Fund Grant for her translation of Haytham El-Wardany's *Things That Can't Be Fixed* and her translation, with Adam Talib, of Raja Alem's *The Dove's Necklace* received the 2017 Sheikh Hamad Award. Her work has appeared in *Frieze*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The Believer*, *Mousse*, *McSweeney's*, *The Common*, *Asymptote*, and others. She is one third of teneleven, an agency for contemporary Arabic literature.

Shortlisted

Nadiyah Abdullatif and **Anam Zafar** for a translation of *Yoghurt and Jam (or How my Mother Became Lebanese)* by Lena Merhej (Balestier Press)

Nada Faris for a translation of *Lost in Mecca* by Bothayna Al-Essa (DarArab For Publishing and Translation)

Kay Heikkinen for a translation of *Before the Queen Falls Asleep* by Huzama Habayeb (MacLehose Press)

Sawad Hussain for a translation of *Edo's Souls* by Stella Gaitano (Dedalus)

Robin Moger for a translation of *Traces of Enayat* by Iman Mersal (And Other Stories)

Judges

Raphael Cohen (chair)
Michael Caines
Laura Watkinson
Nariman Youssef

Sponsors

The Banipal Trust for Arab Literature was founded in 2004 by the publisher of Banipal magazine. It supports and promotes cultural dialogue between the Arab world and the West, the translation into English and publication of works by contemporary Arab authors, and the production of live literature events with Arab authors in the UK. The prize is sponsored by the **Saif Ghobash family** in memory of their husband and father, the late Saif Ghobash (21 October 1932–25 October 1977) who was a passionate bibliophile.

'The six shortlisted works for the 2024 prize comprise three novels, a graphic memoir, a prison memoir and a biographical detective story. Strikingly, five of the six shortlisted entries are authored by women. Furthermore, three of them deal explicitly with motherhood and the mother-child relationship, while a fourth charts the psychological collapse of a father and mother whose child is kidnapped. That said, all the works reflect universal concerns through specific local contexts and visions.'

– The Banipal Prize judges



THE TA FIRST PRIZE

FOR A DEBUT TRANSLATION FROM ANY LANGUAGE

Winner

Deanna Cachoian-Schanz and editor **Tatiana Ryckman** for a translation from Eastern Armenian of *A Book, Untitled* by Shushan Avagyan (Tilted Axis Press)

'This is a feat and a triumph. It deserves to be studied at university translation programmes across the world. Deanna Cachoian-Schanz has brought Avagyan's extraordinary accomplishment into English with such love, attention and finesse, there could not be a more deserving winner.'

– Clare Richards

Deanna Cachoian-Schanz is a translator and literary theorist who writes on translation, gender and nationalism, and technologies of racialization in the geographies of Armenia, Turkey, and their diasporas. Having called these places, and likewise Italy and her native New York

home, she is now a recent transplant from Istanbul to Los Angeles as she completes her dissertation at the University of Pennsylvania.

Tatiana Ryckman is the editor of Awst Press and the author of two works of fiction, *The Ancestry of Objects* and *I Don't Think of You (Until I Do)*. Tatiana is a 2024 New York Council of the Arts grant awardee and a former Yaddo artist in residence. She can be found in Buffalo, NY.

Runner-up

James Young and editor **Stella Sabin** for a translation from Portuguese of *The Love of Singular Men* by Victor Heringer (Peirene Press)

'James Young's translation [...] struck me as an example of everything a good translation should be: fluent, virtuosic, nimble, practically flawless.'

– Rahul Bery

Shortlisted

Joshua L. Freeman and editors **Bea Hemming** and **Jenny Dean** for a translation from Uyghur of *Waiting to be Arrested at Night* by Tahir Hamut Izgil (Jonathan Cape, Vintage, PRH)

Mirgul Kali and editor **Deborah Smith** for a translation from Kazakh of *To Hell with Poets* by Baqytgul Sarmekova (Tilted Axis Press)

Dias Novita Wuri and editor **Marika Webb-Pullman** for a translation from Indonesian of *Birth Canal* by Dias Novita Wuri (Scribe Publications)

Judges

Rahul Bery
Gesche Ipsen
Clare Richards

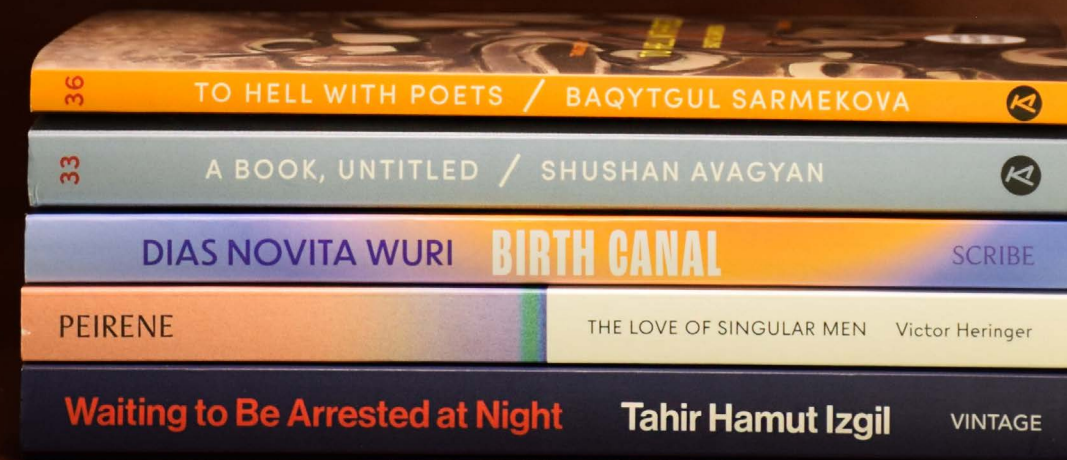
Sponsors

Daniel Hahn is a writer, editor and translator. He founded the TA First Translation Prize in 2017 with his share of the winnings from the International Dublin Literary Award.

Jo Heinrich translates from French and German; her translation of *Marzahn, Mon Amour* by Katja Oskamp won the 2023 Dublin Literary Award and was runner-up for the 2022 TA First Translation Prize.

'The shortlist covers a wonderful range of cultures, languages and genres – reading it was like travelling a dozen thought zones from your armchair. A really good book makes your world shift, if only momentarily, and thanks to these translators mine did just that, several times over. Being a first-rate translator involves being a first-rate writer too, in addition to real intellectual effort and an intimate knowledge of the language and culture you are translating from. All those on the shortlist have shown what they are made of, and I wish them and their editors good luck with their future work.'

– Gesche Ipsen



THE SCHLEGEL-TIECK PRIZE FOR A TRANSLATION FROM GERMAN

Winner

Andrew Shanks for a translation of *Revelation Freshly Erupting: Collected Poetry* by Nelly Sachs (Carcanet Press)

'This collection, which covers the whole of the poet's career, has the depth of prophecy, the elemental power of fury at the events of the twentieth century. The poems are religiously, mythically charged, percussive and compressed, with a dense, dark, wrenching music that goes straight to the heart. This creative translation is a towering achievement in its own right.'

– Shaun Whiteside

Andrew Shanks is a now retired Church of England priest; for ten years Canon Theologian at Manchester Cathedral. He has published numerous works of philosophical theology; including for instance *'What Is Truth?'* Towards a Theological Poetics, and most recently *Sublime Virtue: 'Sainthood', as Rendered*

Problematic by a Dozen Novelists.

Having first discovered the poetry of Nelly Sachs forty years ago, in a bookshop in Marburg, he has been steadily at work on his translations/imitations pretty much ever since.

Runner-up

Imogen Taylor for a translation of *Glorious People* by Sasha Salzmann (Pushkin Press)

'Imogen Taylor's magnificent translation is elegantly haunting. It has a skilful cogent style that clasps the reader's attention without losing focus of the nuances of disintegration of the Soviet Union that reverberated through the lives of ordinary people.'

– Anju Okhandiar

Shortlisted

Gillian Davidson for a translation of *Library for the War-Wounded* by Monika Helfer (Bloomsbury Publishing)

Michael Hofmann for a translation of *Every Man for Himself and God Against All: A Memoir* by Werner Herzog (The Bodley Head, Vintage, Penguin Random House UK)

Michael Hofmann for a translation of *Kairos* by Jenny Erpenbeck (Granta)

Judges

Gabriel Gbadamosi

Anju Okhandiar

Shaun Whiteside

'Novels, poetry and fictionalised memoirs from writers still wrestling with the legacies of a difficult century. Gripping, reflective, dramatic or simply written as testament to remembered or continuing lives, the overall impression is of a literature working its way towards an uncertain future in which the human story is emphatically central.'

– Gabriel Gbadamosi



THE SCOTT MONCRIEFF PRIZE FOR A TRANSLATION FROM FRENCH

Winner

Patrick McGuinness and **Stephen Romer** for a translation of *The Day's Ration: Selected Poems* by Gilles Ortlieb (Arc Publications)

'The translation by Patrick McGuinness and Stephen Romer reaches for the delicacy, subtle shifts and sense of transience in Ortlieb's work and gets them superbly, so much so that I find myself moving between the original texts and the translations, each adding to the other while I enjoy both.'

– David Mills

Stephen Romer is a poet, critic, editor and anthologist. His latest collections include *Set Thy Love in Order: New & Selected Poems* and a French bilingual collection *Le fauteuil jaune*. He has edited two anthologies of French poetry. He is a lecturer in French at Brasenose College, Oxford.

Patrick McGuinness is a poet, novelist, and translator. His latest collection of poems is *Blood Feather*. His first novel, *The Last Hundred Days*, appeared in 2011. He is Professor of French and Comparative Literature at Oxford, and a Fellow of Saint Anne's College.

Runner-up

Mark Polizzotti for a translation of *Kibogo* by Scholastique Mukasonga (Daunt Books Publishing)

'Limpid pearly prose, almost mythical treatment given to the political turmoil. War, famine, colonialism, genocide: Rwanda is revived from its ashes. Extraordinary and almost disturbing to acknowledge, once again, that literature can transform the real-life horror into something so beautiful. All praise to the English translation, which crystalizes the limpidity of the text.'

– Shumona Sinha

Shortlisted

Penny Hueston for a translation of *Sleepless* by Marie Darrieussecq (Fitzcarraldo Editions)

Natasha Lehrer for a translation of *As Rich as the King* by Abigail Assor (Pushkin Press)

Joyce Zonana for a translation of *The Child and the River* by Henri Bosco (New York Review Books Classics)

Judges

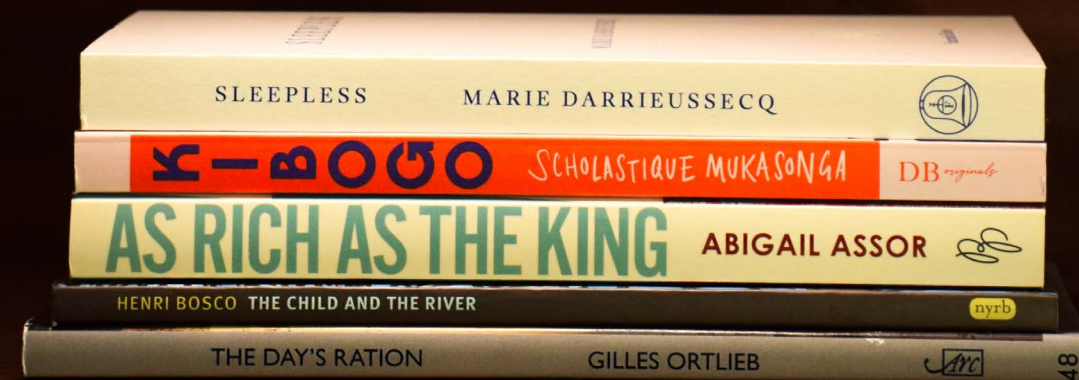
Constance Bantman
David Mills
Shumona Sinha

Sponsors

The French Book Office, a department of the Institut français in London, promotes French literature in the UK by informing publishers, translators, and other potential readers of new publications in French as well as translations into English and rights sales. It also supports translation from French into English via its Burgess Program and organises public events in connection with recent French publications.

'These five titles cover a wonderful range of literary genres and reading experiences, all vividly and sensitively brought out by remarkable translating talent. From a witty and poetic retelling of collective tragedy to the minutiae of postindustrial landscapes, from a self-deprecating exploration of insomnia to childhood adventures and adolescent disillusionment, emotion, wonder and the power of language hold pride of place in this year's shortlist.'

– Constance Bantman



THE VONDEL TRANSLATION PRIZE FOR A TRANSLATION FROM DUTCH

Winner

Kristen Gehrman for a translation of *The History of My Sexuality* by Tobi Lakmaker (Granta Books)

'The History of My Sexuality combines deliciously brisk storytelling with the irreverent observation and punchy delivery of a killer stand-up routine. Paying gleeful homage to Salinger, the novel's deftly spliced chronology sidesteps sentimentality and taps into unexpected seams of loss and heartbreak in its final section. Gehrman brings Lakmaker's bold narrative voice memorably to life with verve and irresistible comic timing.'
– The Vondel Prize judges

Kristen Gehrman is a literary translator from Dutch to English. Originally from Charleston, South Carolina, USA, she now lives in The Hague with her husband and two young children and teaches writing and translation at Vrije Universiteit

Amsterdam. Other recent translations include *The Melting* by Lize Spit, *I Will Live* by Lale Gül, *The Tree and the Vine* by Dola de Jong, and *My Name is Sita* by Bea Vianen.

Runner-up

David McKay for a translation of *We Slaves of Suriname* by Anton de Kom (Polity Press)

'A groundbreaking classic that bears sobering witness to the horrors of slavery under Dutch colonial rule, We Slaves of Suriname feels fresh and raw in David McKay's vivid and supple translation. Each register, from lush landscape description to tragic storytelling and from burning invective to impassioned rallying cry, is handled with ease and authority. Epic in scope, this remarkably concise book traces the legacy of multiple hypocrisies and cruelties to devastating effect.'
– The Vondel Prize judges

Shortlisted

Sam Garrett for a translation of *Falling is like Flying* by Manon Uphoff (Pushkin Press)

Michele Hutchison for a translation of *My Heavenly Favourite* by Lucas Rijneveld (Faber)

Emma Rault for a translation of *We Had to Remove This Post* by Hanna Bervoets (Picador)

Judges

David Doherty
Claire Lowdon
Susan Massotty

Sponsors

The Dutch Foundation For Literature supports writers and translators, and promotes Dutch literature abroad. It invests in the quality and diversity of literature through grants for writers, translators, publishers and festivals, and contributes to the production and distribution of Dutch and Frisian literature at home and abroad. With the support of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, it aims to promote a thriving literary climate, embedded in literary history and attuned to the latest developments in the publishing industry.

'Five extraordinary books. Five remarkable translations. A seminal work on the devastating impact of slavery, a twisted first-person account of sexual obsession, a deliciously irreverent coming-of-age novel, a fiercely literary exploration of childhood trauma, an unsparing look at the internet's dark underbelly. All five books have an unforgettable first-person narrator whose voice has been rendered in English with authenticity, immediacy, and an unerring sense of timing. The shortlisted translators have tackled these idiosyncratic works and challenging themes with exceptional skill, unflinching integrity, and above all, flair.'

– The Vondel Prize judges



THE GREAT BRITAIN SASAKAWA FOUNDATION PRIZE FOR A TRANSLATION FROM JAPANESE

Winner

Masaya Saito for a translation of *The Kobe Hotel: Memoirs* by Sanki Saitō (Isobar Press)

'The Kobe Hotel: Memoirs is an astonishingly frank wartime testament by one of Japan's preeminent poets, and a gripping portrait of the artist as an anti-war bohemian rebel. Masaya Saito's sparkling revision of his own translation made 30 years earlier recovers this masterpiece for a new generation.'
– Maya Jaggi

Masaya Saito was born in Akita prefecture. His Japanese haiku have appeared in *Asahi Shinbun*, *Haidan*, *Haiku*, and *Haiku Bungei*; in 2007 he won the Asahi Haiku Shinjin Award for his sequence of fifty haiku, *Gasshō* ('*The Hands Together in Prayer*'). His English haiku have been published in *Ash* and *Snow Bones*, and in the anthology *Haiku in English: The*

First Hundred Years. His translations of Japanese haiku appear in *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Japanese Literature*. He has also recently published a translation of *Selected Haiku 1933-1962*.

Runner-up

David Boyd for a translation of *The Factory* by Hiroko Oyamada (Granta Publications)

'In general, it is not an easy task to translate from Japanese to English as the languages and cultures are so far apart. It is even so, I imagine, when translating a piece like The Factory since the story is set in a peculiar world to the point we sometimes feel it is inscrutable. For this reason, it could be said that David Boyd has translated the untranslatable. So brilliantly. His attention to details is amazing and it is such an enjoyable piece to read.'
– Nozomi Abe

Shortlisted

Brian Bergstrom for a translation of *Slow Down: How Degrowth Communism Can Save the Earth* by Kōhei Saitō (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, Orion Publishing Group Ltd)

Kendall Heitzman for a translation of *Nails and Eyes* by Kaori Fujino (Pushkin Press)

Lisa Hofmann-Kuroda and **Allison Markin Powell** for a translation of *Kappa* by Ryūnosuke Akutagawa (New Directions)

Alison Watts for a translation of *What You Are Looking For Is In the Library* by Michiko Aoyama (Doubleday, Penguin Random House)

Judges

Nozomi Abe
Nick Bradley
Maya Jaggi

Sponsors

The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation was established in 1985 as a non-governmental, non-profit making body with the purpose of helping to develop and sustain good relations between the United Kingdom and Japan. Its main objective is to promote among the people of both countries, in a global context, a mutual knowledge, understanding and appreciation of each other's culture, society, and achievements.

'The popularity of Japanese literature in translation is booming in the UK, and it's wonderful to see the number of books submitted for the prize increasing. This year we even saw a broadening of genre with memoir and non-fiction titles sitting alongside fiction. While the judging was difficult, it was a pleasure to read all the submitted works, and I'm so pleased to see Japanese writing getting the attention it deserves in Britain. Many thanks to both the Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation and the Society of Authors for supporting and running this prize.'

– Nick Bradley



'Most importantly, there is something about the translation community that is immensely supportive.'

– Polly Barton

