

THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS TRANSLATION PRIZES

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THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS TRANSLATION PRIZES

PROGRAMME

Introduced by Paula Johnson
The Society of Authors:

Presentation of the Prizes

Reception in the foyer

The Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize
for translation from the Arabic

The John Florio Prize
for translation from the Italian

The Risa Domb/Porjes Prize
for translation from the Hebrew

The Schlegel-Tieck Prize
for translation from the German

The Scott Moncrieff Prize
for translation from the French

The Premio Valle Inclán
for translation from the Spanish

THE SAIF GHOBASH BANIPAL PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE ARABIC

Winner:

Jonathan Wright

for his translation of
The Bamboo Stalk
by Saud Alsanousi
(Bloomsbury Qatar
Foundation Publishing)

Jonathan Wright's seamless English rendering does full justice to the original, exhibiting a sureness of touch that fully captures the spirit of the Arabic version. Although the particular cultural context of the work will be unfamiliar to many English-speaking readers, Wright's 'page-turner' translation has a universal appeal, and it

is difficult not to be moved by the predicament of the narrator, with his dual identity of Isa and José, as he comes to terms with the reality of life in Kuwait.' The 2016 Banipal judges

Sponsors:

Omar Saif Ghobash who, with his family, sponsors the Prize in memory of his late father, is from the United Arab Emirates. Saif Ghobash was a man passionate about Arabic literature as well as international works.

The Banipal Trust for Arab Literature

Judges:

Lucy Popescu
Zahia Smail Salhi
Paul Starkey
Bill Swainson

The £3,000 Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize, first awarded in 2006, is presented annually. The prize was established by *Banipal*, the magazine of modern Arab literature, and the Banipal Trust for Arab Literature.





Extract from *The Bamboo Stalk* by Saud Alsanousi
Translated by Jonathan Wright (Bloomsbury Qatar
Foundation Publishing)

Kuwait was beautiful. That's what I thought when Ghassan took me out to the shopping malls and the restaurants. The streets were remarkably clean. They had to be, because the cars that drove on them weren't ordinary cars. Each building and house was different, and each had some special feature – the colours, the design and so on. And the cars parked outside were so beautiful!

I was particularly struck by the way men kissed each other as a form of greeting. In fact it wasn't really a kiss, but it came close to one. The man brushed his cheek against the other man's cheek as they shook hands. I heard from Ghassan that it was the traditional form of greeting here, and not just between men. In fact the women did the same when they greeted each other.

Copyright © Saud Alsanousi, 2012.
Translation © Jonathan Wright, 2015.

Between 1980 and 2009, **Jonathan Wright** worked for Reuters news agency, based in Egypt, Lebanon, Sudan, Kenya, Tunisia, Cyprus, London and Washington DC. During this period, he was U.S. State Department correspondent for the agency, travelling the world with Secretaries of State Madeleine Albright and Colin Powell. His latest literary translations include: *The Longing of the Dervish: A Novel* by Sudanese author Hammour Ziada, which won the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature; *The Televangelist* by Ibrahim Essa (Hoopoe Fiction, Egypt/USA) and *Land of No Rain* by Amjad Nasser (BQFP, 2014), which was commended for the 2015 Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize.

He was joint winner of the 2013 Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize for his translation of the novel *Azazee!* by Youssef Ziedan (Atlantic Books, 2012) and in 2014 he won the

Independent Foreign Fiction Prize for his translation of *The Iraqi Christ* by Hassan Blasim (Comma Press, 2013). He was a judge of the 2014 Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize.

Saud Alsanousi is a Kuwaiti novelist and journalist born in 1981. His work has appeared in a number of publications, including *Al-Watan* newspaper and *Al-Arabi*, and he currently writes for *Al-Qabas* newspaper. He lives in Kuwait and is working on a new novel.

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 JOHN FLORIO PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE ITALIAN

Winner:

Jamie McKendrick

for his translation
of *Archipelago* by
Antonella Anedda
(Bloodaxe Books)

'Anedda's complex weft of the concrete and the commonplace against a backdrop of dislocation poses a real challenge to the translator. Where Anedda crisscrosses the usual navigational lines between poetry and prose, McKendrick expertly follows, occasionally shifting course himself to good effect. Archipelago charts an intriguing confluence of poetic minds.' PH

Commended:

Richard Dixon

for his translation
of *Numero Zero*
by Umberto Eco
(Harvill Secker/Vintage)

'Richard Dixon captures brilliantly the intricacies and surprises of Umberto Eco's unpredictable narrative, the richness and playfulness of its language and its clever interweaving of satire, conspiracy theory, psycho-geography and sharp observation of contemporary social and media trends, giving us a lively, thoroughly enjoyable reading experience.' CV

Sponsors:

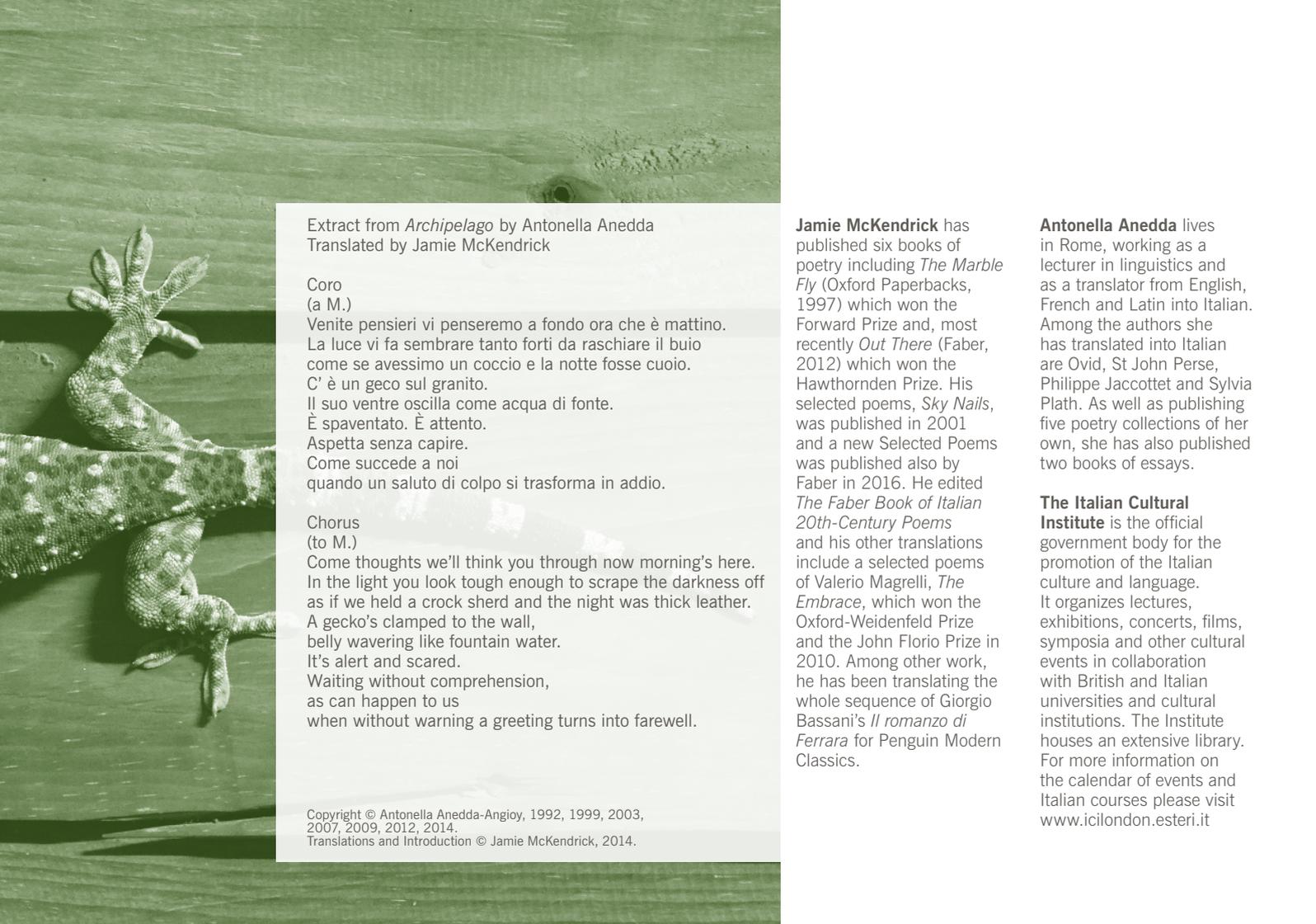
Italian Cultural Institute
The Society of Authors

Judges:

Paul Howard
Cristina Viti

The John Florio Prize,
awarded biennially since
1963, is worth £2,000.





Extract from *Archipelago* by Antonella Anedda
Translated by Jamie McKendrick

Coro
(a M.)

Venite pensieri vi penseremo a fondo ora che è mattino.
La luce vi fa sembrare tanto forti da raschiare il buio
come se avessimo un cocchio e la notte fosse cuoio.
C'è un gecko sul granito.
Il suo ventre oscilla come acqua di fonte.
È spaventato. È attento.
Aspetta senza capire.
Come succede a noi
quando un saluto di colpo si trasforma in addio.

Chorus
(to M.)

Come thoughts we'll think you through now morning's here.
In the light you look tough enough to scrape the darkness off
as if we held a crock sherd and the night was thick leather.
A gecko's clamped to the wall,
belly wavering like fountain water.
It's alert and scared.
Waiting without comprehension,
as can happen to us
when without warning a greeting turns into farewell.

Copyright © Antonella Anedda-Angioy, 1992, 1999, 2003,
2007, 2009, 2012, 2014.
Translations and Introduction © Jamie McKendrick, 2014.

Jamie McKendrick has published six books of poetry including *The Marble Fly* (Oxford Paperbacks, 1997) which won the Forward Prize and, most recently *Out There* (Faber, 2012) which won the Hawthornden Prize. His selected poems, *Sky Nails*, was published in 2001 and a new Selected Poems was published also by Faber in 2016. He edited *The Faber Book of Italian 20th-Century Poems* and his other translations include a selected poems of Valerio Magrelli, *The Embrace*, which won the Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize and the John Florio Prize in 2010. Among other work, he has been translating the whole sequence of Giorgio Bassani's *Il romanzo di Ferrara* for Penguin Modern Classics.

Antonella Anedda lives in Rome, working as a lecturer in linguistics and as a translator from English, French and Latin into Italian. Among the authors she has translated into Italian are Ovid, St John Perse, Philippe Jaccottet and Sylvia Plath. As well as publishing five poetry collections of her own, she has also published two books of essays.

The Italian Cultural Institute is the official government body for the promotion of the Italian culture and language. It organizes lectures, exhibitions, concerts, films, symposia and other cultural events in collaboration with British and Italian universities and cultural institutions. The Institute houses an extensive library. For more information on the calendar of events and Italian courses please visit www.icilondon.esteri.it

THE RISA DOMB/PORJES PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE HEBREW

Winner:

Rachel Tzvia Back

for her translation of
*In the Illuminated
Dark* by Tuvia
Ruebner (University of
Pittsburgh Press)

'Rachel Tzvia Back's superb and moving translation reproduces the richness and simplicity of Reubner's Hebrew as it offers the readers an honest and beautiful rendition of his poetic world. The landscapes, the colours and the images of the original poems remain present in Back's English, as are the rich sound patterns with their soft music. She offers Ruebner's 'echoless' and sometimes 'trembling' voice a natural home in English poetry, turning these poems into continuous dialogue between poet and readers.'
TD

Commended:

Dalya Bilu for her translations of the novels *Married Life* (Toby Press) and *Viennese Romance* (Scribe Publications) by David Vogel

'Dalya Bilu's translation of David Vogel's novels deserves special praise for an outstanding rendition of a unique voice in modern Hebrew writing.' TD

'These sure-footed switches between farce, lyricism and absurdity deserve high honours.' BD

Also commended: Evan Fallenberg's translation of *Memories After My Death: The Story of Joseph 'Tommy' Lapid* by Yair Lapid (Elliot & Thompson) and Nicholas de Lange's translation of *Scenes from Village Life* by Amos Oz (Vintage Books).

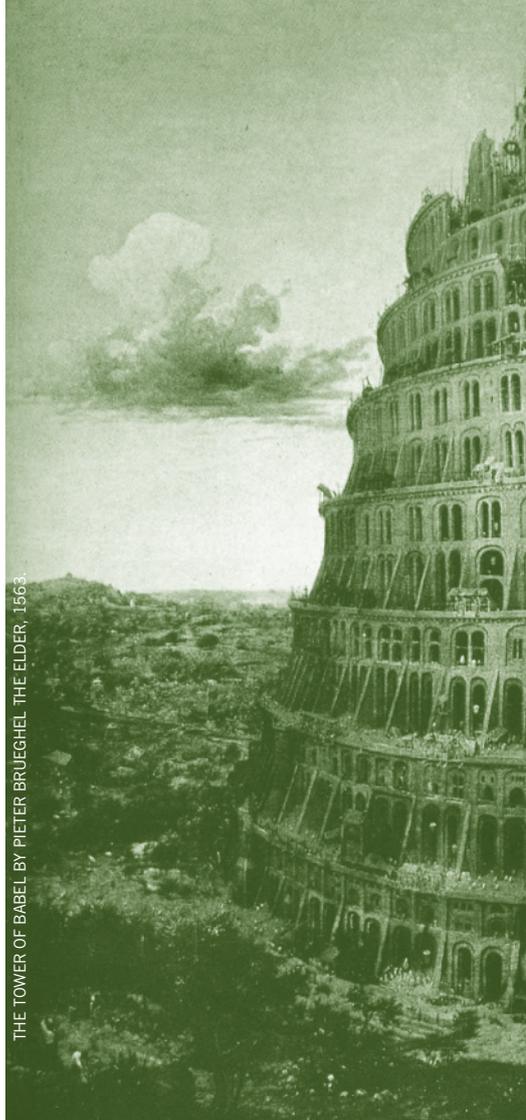
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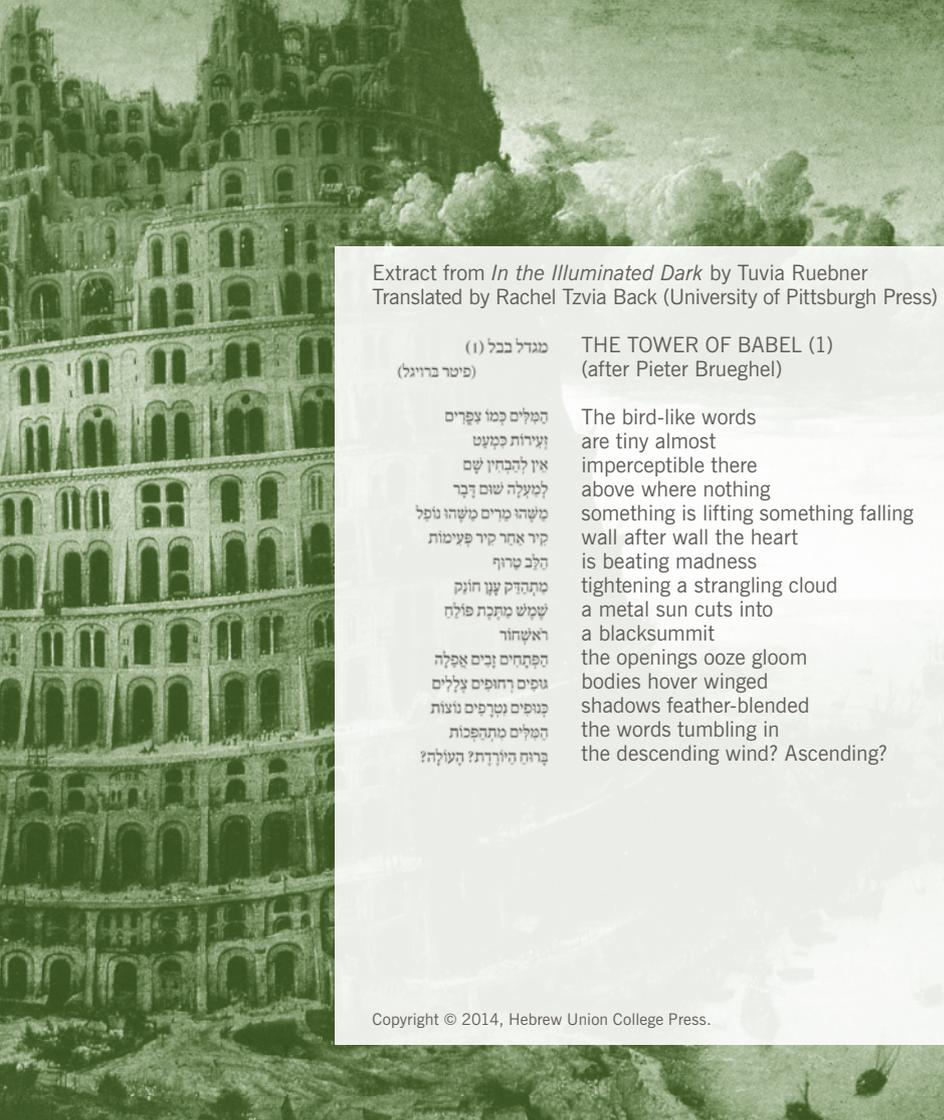
The Edith and Ferdinand
Porjes Charitable Trust

Judges:

Dr. Tamar Drukker
Adrianna Jacobs
Boyd Tonkin

The Risa Domb/Porjes of £2,000 has been awarded triennially since 1998 and recognises the English translation of a full-length Hebrew book, fiction or non-fiction, of general interest and literary merit.





Extract from *In the Illuminated Dark* by Tuvia Ruebner
Translated by Rachel Tzvia Back (University of Pittsburgh Press)

מגדל בבל (1)
(פיטר ברויגל)

המילים כמו צפרים
זעירות כמעט
אין להבחין שם
למעלה שום דבר
משהו מרים משהו נופל
קיר אחר קיר פעימות
הלב טרוף
מתנדק שן חונק
שמש מתכת פולה
ראשחוד
הפתחים זכים אפלה
נופים רחופים צללים
קנפים נטרפים נוצות
המילים מתהפכות
ברוח הירדת? העולה?

THE TOWER OF BABEL (1)
(after Pieter Brueghel)

The bird-like words
are tiny almost
imperceptible there
above where nothing
something is lifting something falling
wall after wall the heart
is beating madness
tightening a strangling cloud
a metal sun cuts into
a blacksummit
the openings ooze gloom
bodies hover winged
shadows feather-blended
the words tumbling in
the descending wind? Ascending?

Rachel Tzvia Back is a poet, translator, and professor of literature at Oranim College in northern Israel, where she is head of the Graduate English Program. She is the author of several poetry collections, including *A Messenger Comes*; *On Ruins & Return: Poems 1999-2005*; *The Buffalo Poems*; and *Azimuth*. Other translations include *With an Iron Pen: Twenty Years of Hebrew Protest Poetry* and *Lea Goldberg: Selected Poetry and Drama*.

Tuvia Ruebner is Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at Haifa University in Israel. He is a winner of the Israel Prize, largely regarded as the state's highest honour, and translator of the works of S.J. Agnon, Goethe, Ludwig Strauss, and Friedrich Schlegel.

The Edith and Ferdinand Porjes Charitable Trust is a grant-making charity which was established in the late 1970s by the late Edith and Ferdinand Porjes who arrived in England as refugees from Czechoslovakia in the late 1930s. The Trust was constituted for general charitable purposes with particular regard to the promotion of the arts both in the UK and Israel and to welfare within the Jewish community with special reference to the needs of children and young people.

THE SCHLEGEL-TIECK PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN

Winner:

Iain Galbraith for his translation of *Self-Portrait with a Swarm of Bees* by Jan Wagner (Arc Publications)

'Self-Portrait with a Swarm of Bees showcases poetry, and poetry translation, at their exhilarating best. This is an inventive, ingenious collection of poems in German and English – absolutely exhilarating! Galbraith's renderings are delightful, surprising, sensitive, robust: a masterclass.' EJ

Commended:

Anthea Bell for her translation of *All for Nothing* by Walter Kempowski (Granta)

'Kempowski's novel provides fascinating insights into the little-considered margins of Hitler's Reich and into the relationship between the everyday and the abnormal. The constantly shifting narrative perspective and the array of historically specific references present substantial challenges for the translator, and Anthea Bell responds to this with a translation which like the original gradually absorbs and engrosses the reader in the strangeness of German-occupied Eastern Europe in the final stage of the Second World War.' JJ

Sponsors:

The Goethe-Institut
The German Embassy

Judges:

Emily Jeremiah
James Jordan

The Schlegel-Tieck Prize (£3,000) has been awarded annually since 1965 and takes its name from two great poets of the Romantic period, August William Schlegel (1767-1845) and his friend Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853), also a noted translator.



Extract from *Self-Portrait with a Swarm of Bees* by Jan Wagner
Translated by Iain Galbraith (Arc Publications)

SHEPHERD'S PIE

schafe sind wolken, die den boden lieben.
der schäfer liebt marie. streut nüsse auf
den hang, souffliert die drei berühmten worte.
die herde blökt, frißt sie als weiße schrift
aufs tafelgrün. dahinter springt der punkt,
der hirtenhund. am grund des tales zieht
man abendschatten vor die fenster. sieht
den hang nicht und die hügel, nicht die wolken.
wolken, die schafe sind, vom wind getrieben.

sheep are clouds who love the ground.
the shepherd's in love with marie. he scatters
nuts on the slope, elicits the three famous words.
the flock bleats, gobbling them up as white script
on a green board. behind them bounces a dot,
the sheepdog. in windows down in the valley
they are drawing the evening shadows. they
do not see the slope or hillside, nor the clouds:
clouds that are sheep the wind has found.

Copyright © Jan Wagner, 2001, 2015.
Translation © Iain Galbraith, 2015.

Iain Galbraith is a prolific translator of German and Austrian poetry, while his own poems have appeared in numerous anthologies and journals. A winner of the prestigious John Dryden Translation Prize, and editor of five anthologies of poetry, his recent translated books include a selection of W. G. Sebald's poetry, *Across the Land and the Water* (2011).

Jan Wagner has lived in Berlin since 1995. A poet, essayist and translator of British and American poetry (Charles Simic, Simon Armitage, Matthew Sweeney, Robin Robertson), he was also, until 2003, co-publisher of *The Outside of the Element*, a boxed loose-leaf periodical based on an idea by Marcel Duchamp. He has published six volumes of poetry and has received numerous awards.

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany, promoting the study of

German language globally and encouraging international cultural cooperation. It organises and supports arts programmes, fosters German literature in translation, delivers German language courses, and offers information and training services for teachers of German. The library of the Goethe-Institut London serves as a resource for those interested in contemporary Germany. The Schlegel-Tieck Prize is supported by the Goethe-Institut (www.goethe.de/uk) and the German Embassy.

The German Embassy works closely with the Goethe-Institut, the German Academic Exchange Service, the German School of London and the Bilateral Youth Organisation UK German Connection to promote the German language and German arts and culture around the UK. It has supported the prestigious Schlegel-Tieck Prize since its inception. www.london.diplo.de

THE SCOTT MONCRIEFF PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE FRENCH

Winners:

Natasha Lehrer and
Cécile Menon for their
translation of *Suite
for Barbara Loden*
by Nathalie Léger
(Les Fugitives)

*'Suite for Barbara Loden,
a novel and biography
which never settles
for the traditional
parameters of either, is
elegantly, intelligently, and
sympathetically translated
by its joint translators.
Natasha Lehrer and Cécile
Menon give this novel of
striking originality and
importance a stylish new
incarnation, without losing
any of its thought-provoking
and unsettling tone.'* IKP

Commended:

Sophie Lewis for
her translation of
Héloïse is Bald by
Émilie de Turckheim
(Jonathan Cape)

*'Heloise is Bald is a
delightfully and slyly
unusual novel, tracking
desires often labelled
amoral and perverse,
and Sophie Lewis's
fine translation is
correspondingly elegant,
smooth and unruffled.'* MR

Sponsors:

The Institut français du
Royaume-Uni
The Society of Authors

Judges:

Ian Patterson
Michèle Roberts

The Scott Moncrieff Prize of
£1,000 has been awarded
annually since 1965 and is
named after Scott Moncrieff,
the celebrated translator of
*Proust's Remembrance of
Things Past*.





Extract from *Suite for Barbara Loden* by Nathalie Léger
Translated by Natasha Lehrer and Cécile Menon (Les Fugitives)

‘I’m having dinner in the type of noisy restaurant you only find in New York, where everything seems to have been designed for people to meet up and then to be unable to hear what the other is saying, the impossibility of having a conversation being the very sign of the success of the exchange. Jenny is literally shouting as she tries to explain to me the essential importance of the sexual and social question.’

Copyright © Éditions P.O.L., 2012.
Translation © Natasha Lehrer and Cécile Menon, 2015.

Natasha Lehrer is a critic, translator and editor. She is literary editor of the *Jewish Quarterly*. She read English at Oxford University and has an MPhil in Comparative Literature from the Université de Paris VIII. Her most recent translation is *Journey to the Land of the Real*, by Victor Segalen, published by Atlas Press in 2016.

Cécile Menon is the founder of Les Fugitives, an independent press focussing on innovative writing by award-winning francophone female authors previously unavailable in English. She studied English literature at the Sorbonne Nouvelle and has an MA in French literature from the University of London. *Suite for Barbara Loden* is her first book-length, published translation in English.

Nathalie Léger is a writer, an editor, archivist and a curator. *Supplément à la vie de Barbara Loden* won the

prestigious *Prix du livre Inter* 2012, voted for by readers across France. She curated the 2002 exhibition on Roland Barthes and the 2007 exhibition on Samuel Beckett, both at the Pompidou Centre. Since 2013, she has been the Director of the *Institut Mémoires de l'Édition Contemporaine*, a unique cultural institute dedicated to the archives of 20th and 21st century French literature.

The Institut français du Royaume-Uni

The French Book Office, a department of the French Embassy 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 and debates.

THE PREMIO VALLE INCLÁN FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE SPANISH

Winner:
Christina MacSweeney
for her translation of
The Story of My Teeth
by Valeria Luiselli
(Granta)

'With echoes of Cervantes, Sterne, Diderot and the picaresque novel, Valeria Luiselli has written a witty, unconventional novel about the events surrounding one man's relationship with his teeth. Highway's life is a celebration of what remains absurd within human existence. Christina MacSweeney and the author have collaborated to produce a creative and original translation. MacSweeney has retained Luiselli's wit and cutting

observations on Highway's life and encounters with the world around him. The Story of My Teeth poses important questions about the creative possibilities that exist within the craft of translation and interrogates the notion of the absent presence of the translator within the text.' CW

Sponsor:
The Society of Authors

Judges:
Caragh Wells
Jason Wilson

The Premio Valle Inclán of £2,000 was first awarded in 1997 and is given annually.





Extract from *The Story of My Teeth* by Valeria Luiselli
Translated by Christina MacSweeney

In the small glass box the auctioneer held high lay waiting for me the sacred teeth of none other than Marilyn Monroe. Yes indeed, the teeth of the Hollywood diva. They were perhaps slightly yellowed. I believe because divas tend to smoke. There was a feeling of tension and unease in the air when the auctioneer opened the bidding. Several ladies who had seen better days, including one of our lady friends, already had their eyes on them. A fat man in outdated clothes spread a wad of bills on his bar table and stood up to light a cigar, to intimidate us I think. But I dug in my heels and got them: the teeth – my teeth – went to me.

Christina MacSweeney's translations of Valeria Luiselli's *Faces in the Crowd*, *Sidewalks* and *The Story of My Teeth* have received critical acclaim and have been shortlisted for various translation prizes. She has also published translations, articles and interviews on a wide variety of platforms, including *Words without Borders*, *Music and Literature*, and *BOMB Magazine*, plus in the anthologies *México20* and *Lunatics, Lovers & Poets: Twelve stories after Cervantes and Shakespeare*. Her translations of Daniel Saldaña París's novel *Among Strange Victims*, and Eduardo Rabasa's *A Zero Sum Game* both appeared in 2016. She is currently working on texts by the Mexican authors Julián Herbert and Verónica Gerber Bibecci.

Valeria Luiselli was born in Mexico City in 1983 and is currently studying for a PhD at Columbia University. Her work has been published in the *New York Times*, *McSweeney's* and *Dazed & Confused*, and has been translated into many languages. Her debut novel was *Faces in the Crowd* and she is also the author of a collection of essays, *Sidewalks*, both of which are published by Granta Books.

Arts Council England champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. It supports a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature and crafts to collections. Arts Council England invests money from government and the National Lottery in arts and culture across England.



The Times Literary Supplement is the pre-eminent English-language journal of literature and ideas. It has a long commitment to the art of translation and to the review of foreign books. That commitment is as strong today in the era of these most valuable and welcoming awards, as it was in the days when it promoted the work of Pavese and Pasternak, Borges and Musil.



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.

The auditorium at the Knowledge Centre, British Library accommodates up to 255 delegates, with facilities for simultaneous translation, film, sound and video presentation, combined with a full team of onsite technical expertise.



The Society of Authors promotes ten translation prizes, six of which are presented tonight. A trade union for all types of writers, illustrators and literary translators, the Society of Authors (SoA) has been advising individuals and speaking out for the profession for more than a century. The SoA administers many other prizes and grants, including the Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction, the Sunday Times EFG Short Story Award and the Betty Trask Award. It distributed more than £400,000 in prizes and grants in 2015.



The Society of Authors Translation Prizes 2017

(to be presented in 2018)

The Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize (deadline for entry 31.3.17)

The Scott Moncrieff Prize (deadline for entry 28.2.17)

The Schlegel-Tieck Prize (deadline for entry 28.2.17)

The Premio Valle Inclán (deadline for entry 28.2.17)

The Goethe-Institut Award for New Translation (deadline for entry 2.10.17)

The Vondel Prize (see: www.societyofauthors.org/Prizes)

For further information on the Translation Prizes:

See: www.societyofauthors.org/Prizes

Email: info@societyofauthors.org

Tel: 020 7373 6642

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'A subscription to the Society
is the greatest investment any writer
can make.' *Philip Pullman*

