

The Corneliu M Popescu Prize for Poetry Translation – shortlist announced!



Professor Mayer's typophone (1890)



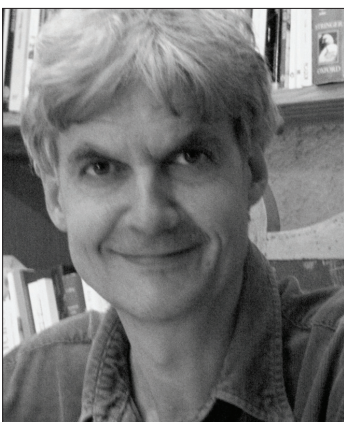
Elaine Feinstein, poet and judge

A chance to travel beyond British poetry

A shortlist of eight titles has just been announced for the Popescu Prize for Poetry Translation 2009. Selecting the shortlist was not an easy task. Elaine Feinstein, who judged this year's prize alongside Stephen Romer, explains:

"The quality of submissions was remarkably high: a guided tour of classic poetry from many languages, countries and periods alongside poets altogether unknown to us. We decided our main criterion had to be bringing a new experience to an English reader."

Fellow judge Stephen Romer was particularly excited by the translations of two strong women poets from Latin America: Gabriela Mistral and Dulce María Loynaz, who he said were "... unjustly neglected, even unknown in English, and now brought to us in all their passionate and classical austerity".



Stephen Romer, poet and judge

This year's submissions have exceeded past years with a total of 85 books entered from 24 countries. The shortlisted books are:

- *Mad Women* by Gabriela Mistral, translated by Randall Couch. Spanish / Chile. (University of Chicago Press).
- *Unfinished Ode to Mud* by Francis Ponge, translated by Beverley Bie Brahic. French / France. (CB Editions).
- *Against Heaven* by Dulce María Loynaz, translated by James O'Connor. Spanish / Cuba. (Carcanet).
- *Poems* by Oktay Rifat, translated by Ruth Christie and Richard McKane. Turkish / Turkey. (Anvil).

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For further information

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- *Courts of Air and Earth*, various, translated by Trevor Joyce. Middle and Early-Modern Irish / Ireland. (Shearsman Books).
- *Birdsong on the Seabed* by Elena Shvarts, translated by Sasha Dugdale. Russian / Russia. (Bloodaxe).
- *Rime* by Dante Alighieri, translated by JG Nichols and Anthony Mortimer. Italian / Italy. (OneWorld Classics).
- *Selected Poems* by CP Cavafy, translated by Avi Sharon. Greek / Greece. (Penguin Classics).

Organised by the Poetry Society and sponsored by the Ratiu Family Foundation, the prize is given biennially to a collection of poetry translated into English from another European language.

The strong shortlist shows the rude health of the British translation scene and provides the opportunity for the curious reader to take a journey beyond their own poetic horizons. "The shortlist is a chance to journey both inwards and outwards, both in the present moment and in those great poets from the past who can still quicken something in us today," says Stephen Romer.

You can read the shortlist at <http://tiny.cc/kDraR>

The winner will be announced on the 19 November 2009 at the Ratiu Foundation, Manchester Square, 18 Fitzhardinge Street, London W1H 6EQ.

– ENDS –

For further information or to interview Elaine Feinstein and/or Stephen Romer call Lisa Roberts on 0207 420 9895 or email marketing@poetrysociety.org.uk

Notes to Editors

- The prize, which was launched in 2003, is named after Corneliu M Popescu who translated the work of one of Romania's leading poets, Mihai Eminescu, into English. On 4 March 1977, at the age of 19, Popescu was tragically killed in an earthquake. The prize is named in his honour.
- Past winners of the Corneliu M Popescu Prize have been David Constantine for his translation of *Lighter than Air* by Hans Magnus Enzensberger in 2003; Adam Sorkin and Lidia Vianu for their translation of *The Bridge* by Marin Sorescu in 2005 and Ilmar Lehtpere for his translation of *The Drums of Silence* by Kristiina Ehin in 2007.
- Elaine Feinstein is a poet, novelist, short-story writer, playwright and translator. Her most recent poetry collection is *Talking to the Dead*.
- Stephen Romer is a poet, translator and editor living in France. His latest collection is *Yellow Studio*, shortlisted for the 2008 T.S. Eliot Prize.
- For further information about the Poetry Society visit www.poetrysociety.org.uk
- For more information about the Ratiu Foundation UK visit: www.ratiufamilyfoundation.com

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