

October 7, 2016— The American Literary Translators Association (ALTA) is delighted to announce the winner of the 2016 Lucien Stryk Asian Translation Prize! The award was officially announced during ALTA’s annual conference, ALTA39: Translation & Crossings, held this year at the Marriott Oakland City Center in Oakland, CA from October 6-9, 2016.

Lucien Stryk was an internationally acclaimed translator of Japanese and Chinese Zen poetry, renowned Zen poet himself, and former professor of English at Northern Illinois University. The [Lucien Stryk Asian Translation Prize](#) recognizes the importance of Asian translation for international literature and promotes the translation of Asian works into English. A \$5,000 cash prize is awarded to the translator of the winning title. This year’s judges are Steve Bradbury, Eleanor Goodman, and Kendall Heitzman. Read what the judges had to say about the winning title below.

Winner: 2016 Lucien Stryk Asian Translation Prize



The Collected Poems of Chika Sagawa

By Chika Sagawa

Translated from the Japanese by Sawako Nakayasu
(Canarium Books)

Sagawa Chika is hardly a household name in Japan, yet she was an important member of the prewar Modernist movement in Japan, intimately connected to some of the biggest names in Japanese literature at the time, and in many ways was far more groundbreaking than the men around her. In Sawako Nakayasu she has found a translator more than equipped to bring her poems into English for the first time.

In the opening of “Rusty Knife,” as in other poems, the natural world intrudes on the objects of everyday, urban life, and the words jangle against one another like so many items in a small room, in rich clusters of bilabials, liquids and velar rhymes and half-rhymes:

Pale blue dusk scales the window.
A lamp dangles from the sky like the neck of a woman.
Murky dark air permeates the room – spreads out a single blanket.
The books, ink, and rusty knife seem to be gradually stealing the life out of me.

We hope that this translation will bring Sagawa Chika new readerships in English and perhaps even Japanese as well.