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Congratulations to the translators on the 2020 Italian Prose in Translation Award shortlist! See what judges Jeanne Bonner, Richard Dixon, and Tony Shugaar had to say about each of the shortlisted titles (in alphabetical order by title). Purchase these titles at the ALTA43 Virtual Bookfair.

**Italian Prose in Translation Award Shortlist**

**At The Wolf’s Table**
by Rosella Postorino
translated from Italian by Leah D. Janeczko
(Flatiron Books)

Set in the final stages of World War II, this novel is inspired by the real-life experience of a German woman who is conscripted to taste dishes to be served to Adolf Hitler. Rosa Sauer’s parents are dead, her husband is fighting on the Eastern Front, and she is sheltering with his parents when the SS come knocking at her door. She and a handful of women, her fellow food-tasters, are forced to eat food that someone might have poisoned. Leah D. Janeczko well renders the intensity of the original text, capturing the drama of the women’s plight, their tensions, anxieties, and despair, and has a fine ear for dialogue that flows smoothly and compellingly.

**Beyond Babylon**
by Igiaba Scego
translated from Italian by Aaron Robertson
(Two Lines Press)

Igiaba Scego’s sprawling modern epic of a novel tells us the story of two half-sisters, and in the process drops us into contemporary Rome, a fascinating city of immigrants and refugees. Readers may see the Eternal City and Italy through an entirely new lens—the lens of people who escaped all kinds of tragedies (in the case of one sister, Argentina’s Dirty War) to remake their lives in a new place. While weaving an engrossing story, Scego, who is of Somali descent, touches on myriad controversial issues facing Italy (and not only Italy), including colonialism, racism, and sexism—and face them it must. Such a brimming, polyglot novel provided no end of challenges to translator Aaron Robertson, who provides an accessible English version of Scego’s witty, frank Italian.

**The Bishop’s Bedroom**
by Piero Chiara
translated from Italian by Jill Foulston
(New Vessel Press)

In this sophisticated and at times moody murder mystery, two men meet up in post-war Northern Italy and become friends as they sail around Lake Maggiore. The author, Piero Chiara, has expertly combined what the late John Gardner considered fiction’s two main storylines: a stranger comes to town, and a man goes on a journey. In this case, the stranger is the owner of a small sailing vessel, while the man who goes on the journey is a wealthy villa owner whose accounting of his wartime adventures in Africa doesn’t quite add up. Or is that the case? Chiara keeps us guessing and reading, with the combination of the stranger and the journey resulting in tragedy, heartache, and disaffection. The novel is eminently readable, thanks to the spare and accurate—in everything from mood to diction—translation by Jill Foulston, who matches Chiara’s peerless knowledge of winds, tides, and other nautical concerns that pepper the narrative.
I Am God
by Giacomo Sartori
translated from Italian by
Frederika Randall
(Restless Books)
God has an existential crisis and falls in love with the unlikeliest of humans. Why, he asks, with eight billion to look after, should I go for a geneticist who also happens to be a fanatical atheist? Being all-powerful is losing its appeal, but would life as a mortal be any better? Through the eyes of our omniscient narrator, we look at the immensity of human insignificance, as he meditates on beauty, goodness, the environment, the cosmos, and our miserable attempts at religion. Sartori’s deliciously absurd humor is magnificently translated by Frederika Randall, who catches his mocking voice with great ingenuity, delivering well-honed one-liners with impeccable timing and all the skill of a standup comic.

Ithaca Forever: Penelope Speaks, A Novel
by Luigi Malerba
translated from Italian by
Douglas Grant Heise
(University of California Press)
Odysseus’s return to his wife Penelope after his twenty-year absence is masterfully retold in this intriguing novel that pries open the gaps in Homer’s narrative. Did she really fail to recognize him when he appeared before her dressed as a beggar? Malerba’s interpretation highlights Odysseus’s vanity—and Penelope’s resentment—when she realizes his first interest is to test her fidelity. He has been fighting wars and seeking adventure, while hers has been a life of solitude, a marriage on hold. Douglas Grant Heise brilliantly captures the voices of the returning victor and his emotional inadequacies, and the long-suffering wife who isn’t prepared to go along with his games.

Since 2015, the Italian Prose in Translation Award (IPTA) has recognized the importance of contemporary Italian prose and promoted the translation of Italian works into English. This prize is awarded annually to a translator of a recent work of Italian prose (fiction or literary nonfiction). Publishers are invited to submit titles for consideration at the beginning of the year. For more information, visit literarytranslators.org.
Congratulations to the translators on the 2020 Lucien Stryk Asian Translation Prize shortlist! See what judges Noh Anothai, John Balcom, and E. J. Koh had to say about each of the shortlisted titles (in alphabetical order by title). Purchase these titles at the ALTA43 Virtual Bookfair.

**Hysteria**
by Kim Yideum
translated from Korean by Jake Levine, Soeun Seo, and Hedgie Choi
(Action Books)

Kim Yideum's *Hysteria*, translated by Jake Levine, Soeun Seo, and Hedgie Choi, resists established Korean literary culture in the tradition of Korean feminist poetics. Page by page, Yideum’s poems against rationality, lyricism, and polite society reckon with both political and personal revolutions. Accordingly, the rendering of her poems across languages is multifold, as Yideum’s words must be as intentionally irrational as historical oppression. These taut, unsettled poems burst into flames in the hands of the reader, a burning fuse creating a clear path for contemporary Korean women’s poetry.

**Pioneers of Modern Japanese Poetry**
by Muro Saisei, Kaneko Mitsuhara, Miyoshi Tatsuji, and Nagase Kiyoko
translated from Japanese by Takako Lento
(Cornell University Press)

*Pioneers of Modern Japanese Poetry*, edited and translated by Takako Lento, is a superb anthology of four major 20th-century poets: Muro Saisei, Kaneko Mitsuhara, Miyoshi Tatsuji, and Nagase Kiyoko, who all made significant contributions to the development of modern Japanese poetry. A substantial selection of work by each poet is presented in nuanced, idiomatic translation facing the original Japanese. The translator succeeds in delivering engaging renditions of the four distinct poets, with their diverse themes, voices, and styles—in evoking, in short, the life of the original words. The collection is further enhanced by a general introduction that provides the literary and historical context of the poems, while each poet’s work is smartly staged with a preface on his or her life and career.

**No Poetry: Selected Poems of Che Qianzi**
by Che Qianzi
translated from Chinese by Yunte Huang
(Polymorph Editions)

In the poem “Three Basic Colors,” an artist draws three lines in crayon on a blank page: “Three straight lines,” someone (a “big shot”) comments, “Symbolizing three paths.” In response, the artist draws something new: “Failing to understand / (what did he say?) / I drew again, as I liked / Three circles.” In his collection *No Poetry*, Che Qianzi displays a similar playfulness with convention (literary, orthographical) and expectation (logical, linear)—as well as with geometric shapes, with the layout of words on the page, with the very form of Chinese ideographs. This bilingual edition allows us to appreciate translator Yunte Huang’s finesse at reflecting these verbal and visual elements in English, allowing a voice to take shape that is delightfully experimental and idiosyncratic. Through Huang’s skill, “no poetry” has not meant “no translation.”
Titles eligible for the 2020 Lucien Stryk Asian Translation Prize were book-length translations into English of Asian poetry, or of source texts from Zen Buddhism (which must not consist solely of commentaries) translated from Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Kannada, Korean, Sanskrit, Tamil, Thai, or Vietnamese into English, published anywhere in the world in the previous calendar year (2019). Publishers and translators are invited to submit titles for consideration at the beginning of the year, and book selection is based on the quality of the finished book in English. For more information, visit literarytranslators.org.

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Congratulations to all the titles selected for the longlist for this year’s National Translation Award in Prose! Featuring authors writing in nine different languages, this year’s longlist expands the prize’s dedication to literary diversity in English. Please note that these titles did not proceed to the shortlist. See what judges Amaia Gabantxo, Emmanuel D. Harris II, and William Maynard Hutchins have to say about each of the longlisted titles, chosen from among nearly 240 submissions, below (in alphabetical order by title). Purchase these titles at the ALTA43 Virtual Bookfair.

**Among the Lost**
by Emiliano Monge
translated from Spanish by Frank Wynne
(Scribe)

> . . . drawing nearer, mothers to children, children to men, those who have been walking now for many days begin to sing their fears.

*Among the Lost* is a rich literary novel layered with echoes of Dante, Shakespeare, and Milton. The novel balances the dark and macabre reality of Mexico's human trafficking around the borderlands with migrant voices and stylistic turns thick with grim humor. The pace is fast—the novel takes place in one day—and yet the scope of it is epic, biblical. Its subject matter is topical, urgent, and necessary, and Monge's execution is thrilling, combining the high lyricism of canonical tales with the earthy notes of collected migrants' testimonies. Frank Wynne's translation is beautiful, a labor of love filled with literary resonance.

**At Dusk**
by Hwang Sok-yong
translated from Korean by Sora Kim-Russell
(Scribe)

> I have something for you, she said.

There's a soft cadence to Hwang Sok-yong's *At Dusk*, a plainness that defies its subject matter. Ordered around a tale of rags to riches, the novel follows architect Park Minwoo—a once a slum-dweller—and a lost love, Cha Soona, whose recounting of their common memories makes Park Minwoo reconsider the nature of his own evolution: his successful architectural practice, and the changes it has effected in the Korean landscapes and in the lives of the inhabitants of those landscapes (himself included). The story grows more political as it moves, questioning the nature of progress and the evolution of Korean society itself. Sora Kim-Russell's translation imbues its apparent narrative succinctness with something larger and more menacing.

**Ithaca Forever: Penelope Speaks**
by Luigi Malerba
translated from Italian by Douglas Grant Heise
(University of California Press)

> I've never trusted sailors, whom I know to be the biggest liars in the world.

What might have been one more clever adaptation of Homer's *Odyssey* with special attention to Penelope becomes, through the combined alchemy of the late author and the lively translator, a convincing contemporary novel.
—National Translation Award in Prose Longlist

**The Old Woman and the River**
by Ismail Fahd Ismail
translated from Arabic by Sophia Vasalou
(Interlink Books)

*Um Qasem racks her brain... As... an important question weighs on her mind... “What will happen to our nine donkeys?”*

As the recently deceased Kuwaiti author, who was born in Iraq, explains (whether factually or not) in his preface, one strip of farmland, his natal village, was spared from destruction by the Iran-Iraq war. He invents (or describes) a village woman whose dedication to her land and to her departed or deceased neighbors wins the hearts of the Iraqi soldiers bivouacked nearby and charged with defending the area. She thus saves her fertile village, aided and abetted by her donkey. The translator never allows the pathos of the story to turn to bathos in this gentle, heartfelt tale.

**The Quarter**
by Naguib Mahfouz
translated from Arabic by Roger Allen
(Saqi Books)

*Umm Radi, who sold spice-paste, declared: “Glances from those flashing eyes... go straight into the heart of the person she’s talking to...”*

Roger Allen has, for many years, been one of the most distinguished Western scholars and translators of Arabic literature. He brings those years of study and his personal friendship with Naguib Mahfouz to excellent purpose in this translation of a formerly lost set of stories by the late Nobel Prize winner. For readers of Mahfouz, this book may well remind them of his book Fountain and Tomb. Like that collection of stories, *The Quarter* has a mysterious, sacred structure at one end of the street—in this case, a cellar.

**Welcome to America**
by Linda Boström Knausgård
translated from Swedish by Martin Aitken
(World Editions)

*It’s a long time already since I stopped talking. They’re used to it now. My mum, my brother. My dad’s dead, so I don’t know what he’d... say...*

A difficult subject—a troubled girl and her small, shaky domestic world—is narrated so effectively and convincingly by the author and the translator that the book is a joy to read. What more can you ask for?
Congratulations to all the titles selected this year for the longlist for this year’s National Translation Award in Poetry! Featuring authors writing in seven different languages, this year’s longlist expands the prize’s dedication to literary diversity in English. Please note that these titles did not proceed to the shortlist. See what judges Ilya Kaminsky, Lisa Katz, and Farid Matuk have to say about each of the longlisted titles, chosen from among more than sixty submissions, below (in alphabetical order by title).

Purchase these titles at the ALTA43 Virtual Bookfair.

**The Chilean Flag**
by Elvira Hernandez
translated from Spanish by Alec Schumacher
(Kenning Editions)

*La bandera de Chile* is a legendary work that we are all very lucky to finally be able to read in Alec Schumacher’s beautiful English translation. Written in 1981, this book pays homage to the victims of the Pinochet regime. But it’s the formal and tonal qualities of this homage that are, perhaps, most impressive: both playful and mournful, witty and political, tender and sharp, the work continues to defy expectations. It is both a collage of unrelated fragments and a very unified, almost choral project. It redefines the idea of nationhood to such an extent that by the end of the book, the flag becomes a gag in the mouth of that nation. This translation is extraordinary.

**Forty-One Objects**
by Carsten Rene Nielsen
translated from Danish by David Keplinger
(Bitter Oleander Press)

Following in the footsteps of Michaux, Carsten Rene Nielsen reinvents the prose poem as a paragraph in which the line between reality and illusion is no longer obvious: they happen at once, with cinematic clarity. Skillfully translated by David Keplinger, these poems give us a dreamscape where imagination is allowed to roam and possibilities are endless. Carsten Rene Nielsen deserves to be better known outside his native Denmark.

**The Next Loves**
by Stéphane Bouquet
translated from French by Lindsay Turner
(Nightboat Books)

Impulses to luxuriate in the present haunted by anticipated ends, philosophical interrogations made rigorous in pillow talk, and courageous bearing of the body’s—and the mind’s—availability to intimate impressions: Stéphane Bouquet’s *The Next Loves* serves all of these with a claim so light on the reader’s attention that the wanting it leaves is the surest sign of Bouquet’s mastery over the intertwined magic of language and seduction. Lindsay Turner’s brilliance as both poet and translator ensures that every slide across discourses, every rift between fragments, every long run across sequences built of verse or prose evokes Bouquet’s vast desire for vastness itself, as if to “speak / mouths directly in the midst of things.”
The Hammer
by Adelaide Ivánova
translated from Portuguese by Chris Daniels
(Commune Editions)
This debut volume by Brazilian poet Adelaide Ivánova offers a startling in-your-face riff on rape and other gender-based violence, making use of epigraphs, reportage, myth, and literary and other public figures, while weaving a history for the speaker. It’s an important translation. The effect of Ivánova’s short sentences in Chris Daniels’s precise English is catalytic, moving the reader to explore her rich vein of sources, and to connect the dots: “if there are 2 on the mattress / for 1 visitor there will / always be someone not / innocent.”

Books eligible for the 2020 National Translation Award were titles published anywhere in the world in the previous calendar year (2019) in English translation. Publishers are invited to submit titles for consideration at the beginning of the year; book selection is based on the quality of the finished book in English, and the quality of the translation is evaluated by a team of expert readers. For more information, visit literarytranslators.org.
Congratulations to all the titles selected for the shortlist for this year’s National Translation Award in Prose! See what judges Amaia Gabantxo, Emmanuel D. Harris II, and William Maynard Hutchins have to say about each of the shortlisted titles, below (in alphabetical order by title).

**Purchase these titles at the ALTA43 Virtual Bookfair.**

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**Beyond Babylon**
by Igiaba Scego  
translated from Italian by  
Aaron Robertson  
(Two Lines Press)

*I've always pitied Spain.*

*Beyond Babylon* is a polyphonic, transoceanic, fragmented family epic spanning three continents with the Mediterranean Sea at its core—the blue mass that defines the Somali-Italian relationship, the *mare nostrum*: both a grave and a passage to hope. Through half-sisters Mar and Zuhra, Igiaba Scego explores the history of Italian colonialism and the uneven power relations that define it. It's a story of migration and identity, of the so-called marginal condition—marginal through race, gender, religion, and language. It is also a Great Italian Novel, in the biggest sense of the word. Aaron Robertson navigates the polyglottic nature of the text wonderfully, letting the rhythms of Italian and the sounds of Somali, Arabic, and Amharic swim across his translation.

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**The Cheffe: A Cook's Novel**
by Marie NDiaye  
translated from French by  
Jordan Stump  
(Alfred A. Knopf)

*Whereas the applause soon turned to glorification of the Cheffe herself, and then ventured into the secret world of her presumed intentions, a longing to know her truest being, the only possible source for those sublime dishes.*

The translator informs us that Cheffe is a new word in French, meaning “a female chef.” The novel, by French Senegalese NDiaye, deftly parleys the language of culinary delight with the subtleties of nonverbal communication between a businesswoman and her challenging daughter. The enchanting text that results uncovers the histories behind an otherwise very public cheffe and her personal realities.

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**A Couple of Soles: A Comic Play from Seventeenth-Century China**
by Li Yu  
translated from Chinese by Jing Shen and Robert E. Hegel  
(Columbia University Press)

*To have actors act a play about an acting school,*  
...  
*A leading lady and a leading man,  
Form a match that's made in Heaven!*

In translating this delightful 17th-century Chinese romp, Jing Shen and Robert E. Hegel have used their meticulous scholarship to create a lively comedy in which a young scholar and a young actress outwit her parents and corrupt government officials. The translators’ critical apparatus is as thorough as it is unobtrusive.
—National Translation Award in Prose Shortlist

**God’s Wife**
by Amanda Michalopoulou
translated from Greek by Patricia Felisa Barbeito
(Dalkey Archive Press)

*Having lived for so long by the side of Him who created All from Nothing, I am finally creating something of my own. I am creating you.*

Amanda Michalopoulou’s *God’s Wife* is a metaphysical, philosophical, postmodern novel. The question of existence is key to it: writing, and the idea of bringing oneself into being, are built and deconstructed in a narrative that examines notions of love, creation, femininity, and faith. The narrator is unreliable. Whoever this God/husband may be—this is irrelevant—what matters and confounds here is the nature of the wife’s tale itself: the atemporality of heaven makes for an amorphous, nonlinear narrative consisting of letters, myths, stretches of stream-of-consciousness, gossip, hallucinations. Like Penelope, God’s wife can only make and unmake, weave and unweave. And, in the process, make-write herself.

Patricia Felisa Barbeito deftly reflects Michalopoulou’s evocative prose and playful, wandering moods.

**Optic Nerve**
by María Gainza
translated from Spanish by Thomas Bunstead
(Catapult)

*I never used to resort to quotations very much but in these past months I have read like a convict. . . . I have also realized that being good with quotations means avoiding having to think for oneself.*

This engaging work from Argentina provides a self-portrait of the first-person narrator through an analysis of her interactions with quite different works of art. The translator achieves a narrative intensity that does not drag or become pretentious.

**Zuleikha**
by Guzel Yakhina
translated from Russian by Lisa C. Hayden
(Oneworld)

*A village road smoothly curves and flows off toward the horizon, like a river. Windows are already lighting in some houses. Quickly, Zuleika.*

The harsh and desolate land of Soviet-era Siberia forms the backdrop of Yakhina’s first novel, an ambitious narrative capturing the strength of the human spirit. Zuleika discovers the means to survive an abusive husband and cruel mother-in-law in a story wrought with imagery and discovery. Hayden’s powerful, yet sensitive, translation incorporates songs and legends from Russian and Tatar sayings into a seamlessly captivating epic tale. What at first glance appears geographically distant becomes intimate, relatable, and in many ways triumphant.
National Translation Award in Poetry Shortlist

Congratulations to all the titles selected this year for the shortlist for this year’s National Translation Award in Poetry! See what judges Ilya Kaminsky, Lisa Katz, and Farid Matuk have to say about each of the shortlisted titles, below (in alphabetical order by title). Purchase these titles at the ALTA43 Virtual Bookfair.

The Battle Between the Frogs and the Mice: A Tiny Homeric Epic
translated from Greek by A. E. Stallings (Paul Dry Books)

A. E. Stallings’s translations are always a masterclass in music-making. Here, she offers us a lively, crisp version of a classic text: we meet the mouse named Crumbsnatcher, killed by the reckless frog King Pufferthroat, starting a war between species. This age-old parable is well known, but Stallings’s charm- ing and often hilarious version makes it come to life via word choice and rhyming couplets. Translators should know at least one language well, preferably their own, W. H. Auden suggested. Stallings, a virtuoso of English prosody, gives us yet another example of how it is done.

Hysteria
by Kim Yideum
translated from Korean by Jake Levine, Soeun Seo, and Hedgie Choi (Action Books)

One of the co-translators of this good-humored and confrontational book notes in his afterword that the style of Korean poet Kim Yideum is “intentionally excessive . . . and irrational.” Her speaker is a hipster who makes brash statements about quotidi- an experiences that may occur in any crowded city. In the title poem, a woman being groped on the subway imagines her revenge: “I want to kill the motherfucker. . . . If only I could go to the sandy beach on the red coast, moonlit. There, beside the cool waters, I would lay him down. If only.” Yideum turns her glance on her specifically Korean milieu as well. An intriguing, illu- minating volume.

The Last Innocence/The Lost Adventures
by Alejandra Pizarnik
translated from Spanish by Cecilia Rossi (Ugly Duckling Presse)

The directness and lucidity of these translations of multilingual Argentine poet Alejandra Pizarnik present her work to us with its enigmas intact. For example, take “Ashes,” in which the sky described by the poet is then claimed to be watching her, and the atmosphere owns emotions and a face, which one might expect to belong to the speaker: “Night splintered into stars / it watched me stunned / the air scatters hatred / its face beautified by music.” Pizarnik has often been translated into English, but Rossi’s work avoids verbosity, is less Latinate, and is better suited to Pizarnik’s minimalism, which then requires the reader’s thought.
—National Translation Award in Poetry Shortlist

Room in Rome
by Jorge Eduardo Eielson
translated from Spanish by
David Shook
(Cardboard House Press)

Some works don’t begin or end in
the dissolution of translation—which,
rather than being poetry’s unfortunate
devolution, is its origin and life force.
Finding their fingers already tingling
to touch that loose weave, poets like
Jorge Eduardo Eielson can fling their
attentions out across poems long or
short, and return having woven the
unexpected into the prosaic. David
Shook’s translation allows English read-
ers to notice how the knots in Eielson’s
weave gather dread, rage, linguistic
self-awareness, and, somehow, joy.

Tell Me, Kenyalang
by Kulleh Grasi
translated from Malay by Pauline Fan
(Circumference Books)

Translator Pauline Fan, in collaboration
with poet Kulleh Grasi, offers an
English version of Tell Me, Kenyalang
that complicates national categorizing
schemes of world literature. Grasi
intersperses verse written in Malay
with phrases of Kaya and Kelabit,
just two of the languages spoken by
different ethnic and cultural groups
residing in the nation state of Malaysia.
Allowing some Kaya and Kelabit to
remain untranslated, Fan and Grasi give
readers rich multilingual evocations
of multiethnic storytelling, ceremonial
songs, ritual incantations, and dream
weaving. But this is no museum.
Fan’s translation renders the pulse of a
living poet’s contemporary, generative
moments, offering us a text that is
“[n]arrated, alive.”

The Winter Garden
Photograph
by Reina María Rodríguez
translated from Spanish by
Kristin Dykstra with Nancy Gates
Madsen
(Ugly Duckling Presse)

Rodríguez’s poetry is both lyrical and
investigative, captivating and thought-
ful; it is interested in metaphysics, but
also able to deliver philosophical ideas
in precise, elegant language. Dykstra
and Gates Madsen have done an
excellent job of bringing Rodríguez’s
prosodic nuances into an English that
is as fresh as it is delicate. This book,
perhaps more so than any other collec-
tion published this year, captures the
inner workings of the human mind.

Books eligible for the 2020 National Translation Award were titles published anywhere in the world in the
previous calendar year (2019) in English translation. Publishers are invited to submit titles for consideration at
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— Esther Allen, translator of *Zama*, winner of the 2017 National Translation Award
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