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Fiscal Year 2016 NEA Literature Translation Fellowship Recipients

Some details of the projects listed are subject to change, contingent upon prior NEA approval. For the most up to date project information, please use the NEA's online grant search system.

Click on the recipient's name for information on the project.

- **Aron R. Aji,** Iowa City, IA
- **Philip Boehm**, St. Louis, MO
- **Maia Evrona,** Framingham, MA
- **Jeffrey Friedman,** West Lebanon, NH
- **María José Gimenez,** Easthampton, MA
- **Ani Gjika,** Framingham, MA
- **Jennifer Grotz,** Rochester, NY
- **Kathleen Heil,** Fayetteville, AR
- **Jesse Lee Kercheval,** Madison, WI
- **Michelle Har Kim,** Alhambra, CA
- **Michael Leong,** Durham, NC
- **Michael F. Moore**, Long Island City, NY
- **Benjamin Paloff,** Ann Arbor, MI
- **Kit Schluter,** Medford, MA
- **William Schutt,** Baltimore, MD
- **K. E. Semmel,** Milwaukee, WI
- **Donna Stonecipher**, Seattle, WA
- **Jeremy Tiang,** Brooklyn, NY
- **Will Vanderhyden,** Oakland, CA
- **Matvei Yankelevich,** Brooklyn, NY

Aron R. Aji, Iowa City, IA ($12,500)
To support the translation from the Turkish of *My Heart's East*, a collection of poems by Murathan Mungan. A prolific author of nearly 60 works of poetry, fiction, drama, and non-fiction, Mungan (b. 1955) is best known as one of Turkey's foremost lyric poets. *My Heart's East* showcases his aesthetic breadth and sociopolitical engagement. Written mostly in the 1980s and '90s, the poems chronicle the longstanding Turkish-Kurdish conflict that reached unprecedented levels of violence during that period, resulting in at least 40,000 deaths. This translation will be the first time a book-length collection of his poetry appears in English.

Aron Aji has translated numerous works by Turkish writers, including Bilge Karasu, Murathan Mungan, Elif Shafak, and Latife Tekin. He is the recipient of a 2006 NEA Literature Translation Fellowship and a 2004 translation award from the American Literary Translators Association. Currently, he directs the MFA program in literary translation at the University of Iowa. Aji will collaborate on this project with the translator David Gramling.

Philip Boehm, St. Louis, MO ($12,500)
To support the translation from the German of Ilija Trojanow's novel *The Lamentations of Zeno*. First published in 2011, the novel tells the story of a glacialogist who takes a job on a cruise ship for eco-tourists in the Antarctic and, increasingly disturbed by the perils of climate change, eventually erupts into an act of desperation. Neither sermon nor screed, the book is an engrossing inner travelogue of a troubled planet and troubled soul, interspersed with snippets of songs and scraps of conversations. Born in Bulgaria, Trojanow (b. 1965) lived in Germany, Kenya, and India, and has garnered wide acclaim for his many books based on his extensive travels, with rights sold to more than 25 countries.

Philip Boehm is the translator of numerous Polish and German authors, including Herta Muller, Minka Pradelski, Stefan Chwin, Christoph Hein, Peter Schneider, and Bertolt Brecht. He is the recipient of fellowships from the NEA and the Guggenheim Foundation, as well as the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translation Prize, the ALTA National Translation Award, the ATA Ungar Award, the PEN USA Translation Award, the Schlegel-Tieck Prize, and the Oxford-Weidenfeld Prize.

Maia Evrona, Framingham, MA ($12,500)
To support the translation from the Yiddish of *Poems from My Diary* by Abraham Sutzkever. In his lifetime, Sutzkever (1913-2010) wrote more than 1,000 pages of poetry, much of it chronicling his life in Lithuania during the German Occupation, the suffering and endurance of those around him, and his own personal losses (his mother was murdered in a mass execution and his infant son was poisoned). He escaped the Nazis by hiding in a forest until he was rescued by writers in Russia and eventually settled in Israel. *Poems from My Diary* was first published in 1977 as a collection of 75 poems, and later expanded to 180 and republished in 1985. Considered his masterpiece, it was awarded the Israel Prize in 1985 – the only time the prize was awarded for a work of literature written in Yiddish rather than in Hebrew. It has never been translated into English in its entirety.

Maia Evrona is a creative writer, as well as a translator. Her translations of individual poems by Sutzkever have been published in numerous North American literary journals. She has also translated poems from Yiddish by Anna Margolin, and several prose pieces for *The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization*, an anthology forthcoming from Yale University Press.

Jeffrey Friedman West Lebanon, NH ($12,500)
To support the translation from the Polish of *Memorials*, a collection of poems by Mieczyslaw Jastrun. Although he published more than a dozen volumes of poetry and essays and is considered one of the most important Polish poets to come out of the period between the two World Wars, Jastrun (1903-83) is little known outside of Poland. Published in 1969, *Memorials* rises out of a deep well of sadness. A survivor of the Holocaust and the Stalinist period, Jastrun was born Jewish but converted to Christianity at age 17 after serving in the Polish army and contracting typhus. His lyric poetry constructs a fractured past and questions his faith.

Jeffrey H. Friedman is the author of several books of poetry, translation, and flash stories, which have also appeared in dozens of literary journals such as *Poetry*, *American Poetry Review*, *Poetry International*, *Flash Fiction*, *New England Review*, and *The New Republic*. He has been awarded two fellowships from the New Hampshire State Council of the Arts, as well as the Milton Dorfman Prize and the Editors prize of the "Missouri Review." Friedman will collaborate on this project with the translator Dzvinia Orlowsky.

María José Gimenez, Easthampton, MA ($12,500)
To support the translation from the Spanish of the novel *Red, Yellow and Green* by Bolivian-Canadian author Alejandro Saravia. The author of seven books of poetry, Saravia (b. 1962) is one of the most celebrated authors in Hispanic-Canadian letters. First published in 2003, *Red, Yellow and Green* (the colors of the Bolivian flag) tells the story of a writer who has fled his home country of Bolivia and his past as a soldier in the coup d'etat of 1980 and finds himself lost and alone in Montreal in the 1980s. The novel touches on predominant themes found in Latino-Canadian literature and migrant literature across North America – identity, integration, displacement, exile, and political violence.

María José Gimenez is a Venezuelan-Canadian poet and translator based in the U.S. Her work has appeared in such journals as *Drunken Boat*, *The Apostles Review*, *Cactus Heart*, and *The Fourth River*, and in *Cloudburst: An Anthology of Hispanic Canadian Short Stories* (University of Ottawa Press, 2013).

Ani Gjika, Framingham, MA ($12,500)
To support the translation from the Albanian of *Negative Space*, a collection of poems by Luljeta Lleshanaku. Winner of numerous awards in her native Albania, Lleshanaku (b. 1962) is the author of seven books of poetry in Albanian and six books of poetry in Italian, German, Polish, and English. *Negative Space* won the prestigious Book of the Year award in Albania in 2013. Though Lleshanaku refrains from writing about communism directly, through her poems we sense what it meant to live under such rule.

Ani Gjika is a 2010 Robert Pinsky Global Fellow and winner of a 2010 Robert Fitzgerald Translation Prize. Her first book, *Bread on Running Waters*, (Fenway Press, 2013) was a finalist for the 2011 Anthony Hecht Poetry Prize and 2011 May Sarton New Hampshire Book Prize. Her poems and translations from the Albanian language have appeared in such journals as *Salamander*, *Seneca Review*, *AGNI Online*, and *World Literature Today*.

Jennifer Grotz, Rochester, NY ($12,500)
To support the translation from the Polish of a selection of poems by Jerzy Ficowski. Ficowski's poems confront the suffering he witnessed first-hand during World War II and in its long, complicated aftermath in Poland. Born a Christian, Ficowski (1924-2006) studied and wrote about the fate of Jews and Roma in Poland during and after the war. For several years, he traveled with the Gypsies across Poland, immersing himself in their secret world and language. The author of more than a dozen books of poetry (including *A Reading Ashes*, originally illustrated by Marc Chagall), Ficowski is also known for his biography of the Jewish expressionist fiction writer Bruno Schulz, who was murdered in 1942. Titled *Regions of the Great Heresy* (Norton, 2004), it is the only book by Ficowski currently translated into English.

Jennifer Grotz is an award-winning poet and translator from the French and Polish languages. She directs the Masters in Literary Translation program at the University of Rochester and is the poetry editor for Open Letter, a press that publishes exclusively translations. Grotz will collaborate on this project with the translator Piotr Sommer.

Kathleen Heil, Fayetteville, AR ($12,500)
To support the translation from the Spanish of Patricio Pron's collection of short stories *The World Without People Who Ruin It and Make It Ugly*. Born in Argentina and currently living in Madrid, Pron (b. 1975) was named by *Granta* in 2010 as one of the best young contemporary writers in Spanish. He is the author of five short story collections, a book of essays, and six novels. This collection of stories is an examination of German life, written during the decade he lived in Germany. A translation of his novel *My Father's Ghost Is Climbing in the Rain* was published by Knopf in 2013; his short stories have yet to be published in English in book form.

Kathleen Heil's poems, stories, essays and translations have appeared in such journals as *DIAGRAM*, *Quarterly West*, *BOMB*, *The Rumpus*, *PANK*, *World Literature Today, Guernica*, and *Chicago Review.* She completed her MFA in Creative Writing and Translation at the University of Arkansas-Fayetteville in May 2015.

Jesse Lee Kercheval, Madison, WI ($12,500)
To support the translation from the Spanish of *Things by Their Names: the Collected Poems* by Uruguayan poet Circe Maia. The author of nine books of poetry and winner of the 2013 Delmira Agustini Medal of Art and Culture by the President of Uruguay, Maia (b. 1932) is considered a national treasure. In 1972, when the military dictatorship took power in Uruguay, police broke into her house and arrested her husband, leaving Maia behind only because she had just given birth to their youngest daughter. In 1982, her 18-year-old son was killed in an automobile accident. Her poems reflect this tragic past; many of them have been set to music by prominent musicians. To date, no collection of her poetry has been published in the U.S.

Jesse Lee Kercheval is an NEA Creative Writing Fellow and award-winning author of 13 books of fiction, memoir, and poetry. Her translations of Maia's work – as well as the work of other Uruguayan poets – have appeared in numerous journals. She is the editor of *America invertida: A Bilingual Anthology of Younger Uruguayan Poets*, forthcoming from the University of New Mexico Press. Currently, she is on the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she is developing a translation workshop for creative writing students.

Michelle Har Kim, Alhambra, CA ($12,500)
To support the translation from the Spanish of *Flags Behind the Fog*, a book of poems by Japanese-Peruvian poet Jose Watanabe. The fifth of eleven children, Watanabe (1946-2007) was born 300 miles north of Lima, where his parents lived and worked at a sugar hacienda. He is the author of seven volumes of poetry, as well as plays, screenplays, and children's books. *Flags Behind the Fog* is his last collection of poems published in 2006 just before his death, and his most celebrated work. In his poetry one finds desiccated sugarcane fields and graveyards, abandoned estates, the unpretentiousness of neighbors, and encounters with animals and the natural world.

Michelle Har Kim received her doctorate in Comparative Literature from the University of Southern California in 2012. Her dissertation explores a series of Asian-American texts that are written in Spanish and/or that cite the Asian Diaspora in the Americas.

Michael Leong, Durham, NC ($12,500)
To support the translation from the Spanish of *Sky-Quake*, a book of poems by Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro. Along with Gabriela Mistral, Pablo Neruda and his close contemporary Pablo de Rokha, Huidobro (1893-1948) is among the most celebrated figures in Chilean poetry, with an oeuvre spanning 40 books of poetry, fiction, memoir, and drama. Throughout his colorful life, Huidobro experimented with hybrid and cross-genre forms and traveled to and from Europe many times, connecting the avant-garde communities of Paris, Madrid, and Latin America. The long prose poem *Sky-Quake*, which refashions the legend of Tristan and Iseult, is a sequel to his most famous book, *Altazor*, from which stems the Altazor Awards, a national prize in Chile that includes a myriad of artistic categories. Though *Sky-Quake* has been translated into English in the past, this project will present a more contemporary and accessible version to the American public.

Michael Leong is the author of two books of poetry, *e.s.p.* (Silenced Press, 2009) and *Cutting Time with a Knife* (Black Square Editions, 2012), which won a Face Out grant from the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses. His translations from Spanish include *I, the Worst of All* by Estela Lamat (BlazeVOX, 2009). Currently, he is an assistant professor in the English Department at The University at Albany, SUNY. Leong will collaborate on this project with the translator Ignacio Infante.

Michael F. Moore, Long Island City, NY ($12,500)
To support the translation from the Italian of Alessandro Manzoni's classic historical novel *The Betrothed*. Published in 1842 and last translated into English 40 years ago, this 600-page novel is required reading in Italian schools and a monolithic presence in the Italian canon. It follows a young peasant couple forced to flee their small village and embark on a journey that epitomizes the trajectory of many Italians, from pastoral innocence to urban chaos to what Manzoni depicts as a kind of bourgeois complacency. Appointed as a "Senator-for-Life" after the establishment of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, Manzoni (1785-1873) is perhaps best known outside of Italy for the *Requiem Mass* that Giuseppe Verdi composed to commemorate the first anniversary of his death.

Michael F. Moore has translated a wide variety of Italian texts, from contemporary expository prose to classic novels, including works by Alfredo Giuliani, Mario Calabresi, Sandro Veronesi, Erri De Lucca, Fabio Genovesi, and Alberto Moravia. He is a translator and interpreter for the United Nations, chair of the PEN/Heim Translation Fund, and a regular consultant for the Italian Cultural Institute, the Italian Trade Commission, and museums and arts organizations throughout New York.

Benjamin Paloff, Ann Arbor, MI ($12,500)
To support the translation from the Polish of Dorota Maslowska's novel *Honey, I Killed the Cats*. Maslowska (b. 1983) is an award winning, internationally bestselling young author who is among the most respected writers of her generation searching for a new self-definition in post-Communist space. Her third novel, *Honey, I Killed the Cats* traces the friendship of two young women in a busy American city. Whereas one buys – literally and figuratively – the positive product (the perfect body, the cheery disposition, the admiration of her coworkers), the other abides by the commercials that sell through fear (she uses antibacterial gel obsessively, worries about the accumulation of garbage, and has a poor self-image). Both satirical and tragic, the novel exudes a longing for a spiritual foundation in a media-saturated, consumer culture.

Benjamin Paloff is an award-winning poet and translator of such authors as Andrzej Sosnowski, Marek Bienczyk, and Krzysztof Jaworski. His translation of Maslowska's novel *Snow White and Russian Red* was published by Grove Press in 2005. A recipient of an NEA Creative Writing Fellowship in poetry in 2009, Paloff is Assistant Professor in the Departments of Slavic Languages and Literatures and of Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan.

Kit Schluter, Medford, MA ($25,000)
To support the translation from the French of a compilation of multigenre literary works by Marcel Schwob. Schwob (1867-1905) was praised by most of the major writers and artists in France during his lifetime, as well as Roberto Bolaño, Jorge Luis Borges, Oscar Wilde, and Robert Louis Stevenson, with whom he became a close friend. He was a Jewish-French Symbolist author of an enormous and varied body of work that included short stories, novellas, plays, essays, studies of French slang, monographs, and travelogues. Schwob was as versed in the street slang of medieval thieves as he was in the poetry of Walt Whitman. This collection will introduce a more generous selection of Schwob's work to the English-reading community, and will include an introductory text that will serve as the first ever English-language primer to contextualize and illuminate Schwob's influence on international literature after his lifetime.

Kit Schluter's previous translations of Schwob's work include *The Book of Monelle* (Wakefield Press, 2012) and *The King in the Golden Mask* (forthcoming from Wakefield Press). He is the founder, co-editor and book designer of O'clock Press and *Clock* magazine. He received an MFA in poetry from Brown University in May 2015.

William Schutt, Baltimore, MD ($12,500)
To support the translation from the Italian of *My Life, I Lapped It Up: Selected Poems* by Edoardo Sanguineti. Poet, novelist, theorist, playwright, critic, librettist, translator, and politician, Sanguineti (1930-2010) was one of the most influential Italian writers of the post-World War II era and a leading member of the Italian New Vanguard, a group of experimental writers that included Antonio Porta and Umberto Eco. This collection of poems will largely focus on his mid- and late-career work, especially collections from the 1970s and '80s. It will be the first comprehensive selection of Sanguineti's poems translated into English.

Will Schutt is a poet and translator. His collection of poems, *Westerly* (Yale University Press, 2013), was selected by Carl Phillips to win the 2012 Yale Series of Younger Poets award. His translations have appeared or are forthcoming in *A Public Space*, *Drunken Boat*, *AGNI*, *Field*, *Circumference*, *Asymptote,* and *Poetry Northwest*.

K. E. Semmel, Milwaukee, WI ($12,500)
To support the translation from the Danish of Simon Fruelund's novel *The World and Varvara*. The author of six books, Fruelund (b. 1966) has been compared to Raymond Carver, Ernest Hemingway, and Japanese author Haruki Murakami. He is known for his minimalist-realist writing style. Published in 2009 and told with understated humor, *The World and Varvara* is the story of a young man hired to write about an extraordinary 80-year-old woman; what starts as a simple assignment becomes a complex turn of events that includes an international smuggling scheme. Fruelund was an editor for nine years at Denmark's largest publishing house, Gyldendal, before he moved to the country and became a full-time writer.

K. E. Semmel is the translator of two other books by Fruelund: *Milk & Other Stories* (Santa Fe Writers Project, 2013) and *Civil Twilight* (Spout Hill Press, 2013). Other book-length translations of his include *The Absent One* by Jussi Adler-Olsen (Penguin, 2012), *The Caller* by Karin Fossum (Houghton Mifflin, 2012), *The Seventh Child* by Erik Valeur (AmazonCrossing, 2014), and *Rock, Paper, Scissors* by Naja Marie Aidt (Open Letter, 2015).

Donna Stonecipher, Seattle, WA ($12,500)
To support the translation from the German of *Etudes*, a book-length sequence of prose poems by Austrian writer Friederike Mayroecker. Nobel Prize-nominee Mayroecker (b. 1924) has published more than 80 works since 1956 – including poetry, prose, radio plays, and children's books—though she is not nearly as well known in the English-speaking world as her longtime partner, Austrian poet Ernst Jandl. *Etudes* is her latest collection of prose poems, published in 2013 when Mayroecker was 89 years old. The book in many ways is a reckoning with aging and her mortality. The poems display a range of creative devices, including repetition, unusual typography, frequent capitalization, and underlining.

Donna Stonecipher is the author of four books of poetry, including *The Cosmopolitan* (Coffee House Press, 2008), winner of the 2007 National Poetry Series. She has translated work by such writers as Andrej Glusgold, Steffen Popp, Veronika Reichl, Walter Mehring, and Barbara Kohler.

Jeremy Tiang, Brooklyn, NY ($12,500)
To support the translation from the Chinese of Lo Yi-Chin's novel *Far Away*. An award-winning author of ten books of fiction and poetry, Lo Yi-Chin (b. 1967) is one of the most respected contemporary writers in Taiwan, as well as an influential figure among the entire Chinese-speaking world. However, his work has never been translated into English. While the backdrop of classical Chinese literature and Taiwanese border politics remains present in *Far Away*, the storyline is simple and universal: the fraught relations among three generations of a family, and a man caught between duty to his father and responsibility for his wife and children.

Jeremy Tiang has translated novels and books of short stories and essays by such authors as You Jin, Su Wei-chen, Wong Yoon Wah, Zhang Yueran, and Yeng Pway Ngon. He received a PEN/Heim Translation Grant for Zou Jingzhi's *Ninth Building*.

Will Vanderhyden, Oakland, CA ($12,500)
To support the translation from the Spanish of *The Invented Part*, a novel by Argentinean writer Rodrigo Fresan. The author of nine books of fiction, Fresan (b. 1963) is a writer, journalist, literary critic, editor, and translator who, like his close friend Roberto Bolaño, writes as if his entire body of work is an interconnected fictional universe, with reappearing characters and themes and overlapping plotlines. *The Invented Part* is his most recent novel, published in 2014. At 576 pages, it is his longest – and in some ways, his most challenging – work to date. An expansive, encyclopedic work of metafiction similar to David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest* or Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, *The Invented Part* explores childhood, memory, loneliness, sickness, and the joys of tackling great works of literature.

Will Vanderhyden recently signed with Open Letter Books to publish three of Fresan's titles: *Mantra*, *The Bottom of the Sky*, and *The Invented Part*. His translations have appeared in such journals as *The Literary Review*, *Asymptote*, and *Two Lines*. He holds a master's degree in literary translation from the University of Rochester.

Matvei Yankelevich, Brooklyn, NY ($25,000)
To support the translation from the Russian of selected, multi-genre works by Elena Guro. In her short lifetime, Guro (1877-1913) became one of the most influential Russian avant-garde female writers and artists who wrote during what is now called the Russian Silver Age, alongside such contemporaries as Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva, Osip Mandelstam, Vladimir Mayakovsky, and Velimir Khlebnikov. Yet, unlike many of these writers, Guro is practically unknown to English-language readers. What makes her work unique in the context of Russian Futurism is that Guro focused her writing on inner spiritual experience, intuitive awareness, and contemplation, more so than on formal innovation or shocking imagery. This project will collect her prose, diaries, critical notes, and correspondence into a single text.

Matvei Yankelevich is co-founder of Ugly Duckling Press, where he edits the press's Eastern European Poets Series. His translated books include *Today I Wrote Nothing* by Daniil Kharms, *OBERIU: An Anthology of Russian Absurdism*, and *An Invitation for Me to Think: Selected Poems of Aleksandr Vvedensky*, which won the ALTA National Translation Award in 2014.