

P O E T R Y



F O U N D A T I O N

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Poet Anne Stevenson Wins \$50,000 Neglected Masters Award

Four poets receive major new literary prizes

CHICAGO — The Poetry Foundation has announced that Anne Stevenson, Herbert Leibowitz, John Surowiecki, and Brian Culhane are the winners of its fourth annual Pegasus Awards. The announcement was made at a dinner ceremony last night on the stage of the Jay Pritzker Pavilion at Millennium Park in Chicago. Established in 2004, the Pegasus Awards are a series of annual prizes with an emphasis on new awards to under-recognized poets and types of poetry.

Anne Stevenson is the second recipient of the **Neglected Masters Award** of \$50,000. The award brings renewed critical attention to the life's work of a significant but under-recognized American poet. Stevenson was born in England of American parents in 1933. She was brought up in New England and in Ann Arbor, Michigan, graduating with a Major Hopwood Award for poetry from the University of Michigan in 1954. Her many books of poems include *Reversals* (Wesleyan, 1969), *Correspondences* (Oxford University Press, 1974), *The Fiction-Makers* (Oxford University Press, 1985), and *Granny Scarecrow* (Bloodaxe Books, 2000). *Poems 1955–2005*, published by Bloodaxe Books, collects 50 years of her poetry, written during a full and much-traveled life in America, England, Scotland, and Wales. She is also the author of *Bitter Fame: A Life of Sylvia Plath* (Penguin, 1990) and recently of *Five Looks at Elizabeth Bishop* (Bloodaxe Books, 2006). In 2002 she was the inaugural recipient of the Northern Rock Writers Award. In 2003, John Lucas edited a 70th-birthday Festschrift in her honor, *The Way You Say the World*. Her latest collection of poems, *Stone Milk*, will appear from Bloodaxe Books in the autumn of 2007. Stevenson has three children and lives with her husband, Peter Lucas, in Durham, England, and in North Wales. On April 1, 2008, The Library of America will publish *Anne Stevenson: Selected Poems* in conjunction with the Neglected Masters Award. This will be her first poetry publication in the United States in over two decades.

Herbert Leibowitz is the second recipient of the **Randall Jarrell Award in Poetry Criticism**. The \$10,000 prize is awarded for poetry criticism that is intelligent and learned as well as lively and enjoyable to read. Leibowitz is editor and publisher of *Parnassus: Poetry in Review*, the literary journal he and Stanley Lewis founded in 1973 to provide a forum where poets, novelists, and critics of all persuasions could gather to review new books of poetry. In 1976, Leibowitz established the not-for-profit Poetry in Review Foundation to sustain publication of the magazine that has become one of the most important and provocative venues for poetry reviews. Leibowitz was born in 1935; he earned a BA from Brooklyn College and a PhD from Columbia University.

He is professor emeritus of humanities and English at CUNY Graduate Center. In recent years, Leibowitz has been a Guggenheim Fellow, president of the National Book Critics Circle, the Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers Fellow at the New York Public Library, and Senior Fulbright Professor of American Poetry at the University of Barcelona. In 1995, he received the PEN American Center's Nora Magid Award for distinguished editing of a literary magazine; in 2002, he received the Elizabeth Kray Award for Service to Poetry. Leibowitz is the author of two books, *Hart Crane: An Introduction to the Poetry* (Columbia University Press, 1968) and *Fabricating Lives: Explorations in American Autobiography* (Knopf, 1989). He lives in New York City and is married to the playwright and novelist Susan Yankowitz. They have one son. He is currently finishing a critical biography of William Carlos Williams.

John Surowiecki is the inaugural recipient of the **Verse Drama Prize** of \$10,000, honoring a living poet who has written a previously unpublished, outstanding original verse drama in English. In addition to the cash prize, the winning manuscript will be presented as a staged reading in New York and Chicago in 2008. The Verse Drama Prize brings renewed attention to an under-recognized area of poetry and encourages poets to work in a new genre, thereby bringing fresh life to the art. Surowiecki is the author of two poetry collections, *Watching Cartoons before Attending a Funeral* (White Pine Press, 2003) and *The Hat City after Men Stopped Wearing Hats* (The Word Works, 2006 Washington Prize), and five chapbooks. *My Nose and Me: (A TragedyLite or TragiDelight in 33 Scenes)* is his first piece written for the stage. In 2005, Surowiecki was awarded a poetry fellowship from the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism, Office of the Arts. He was born in 1943 and has a BA and MA from the University of Connecticut. Surowiecki is married to Denise Rodosevich, has two children, and lives in Amston, Connecticut. He is a freelance writer and teaches poetry courses at Manchester Community College. His poems have recently appeared in *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *Common Ground Review*, *Connecticut Review*, *Margie*, *Nimrod*, and *Poetry*.

Brian Culhane received the **Emily Dickinson First Book Award**, recognizing an American poet over the age of 50 who has yet to publish a first book of poetry. In addition to publication of his winning manuscript, Culhane received a prize of \$10,000. Culhane, 53, was born in 1954 in New York City and earned a BA from the City University of New York and an MFA from Columbia University. He received a PhD from the University of Washington, studying epic literature and the history of criticism. He currently lives in Seattle with his wife and children, and teaches film and English at the Lakeside School. Through the Washington Commission for the Humanities, he has lectured on Frost and Thoreau throughout Washington state. His poetry has been published in such journals as *The New Criterion*, *The Hudson Review*, *The New Republic*, and *The Paris Review*.

About the Pegasus Awards

The Poetry Foundation has established a family of prizes with an emphasis on new awards to under-recognized poets and types of poetry. Inaugurated in 2004, the Pegasus Awards are announced annually in the fall. The Poetry Foundation believes that targeted prizes can help redress underappreciated accomplishments, diversify the kinds of poetry being written, and widen the audience for the art form. With this in mind, it intends to create additional prizes in the years ahead.

About The Library of America

The Library of America, a nonprofit publisher, is dedicated to publishing, and keeping in print, authoritative editions of America's best and most significant writing. Hailed by *The New York Times Book Review* as the "quasi-official national canon" of American literature, The Library of America each year adds new volumes collecting essential novels, stories, poetry, plays, essays, journalism, historical writing, speeches, and more. In April 2003, The Library of America began a new and important undertaking: a series presenting the most significant American poetry, selected and introduced by today's most discerning poets and critics. Elegantly designed and textually authoritative, the American Poets Project makes available the full range of the American poetic accomplishment in compact and affordable editions.

About Graywolf Press

Graywolf Press is an independent, not-for-profit publisher dedicated to the creation and promotion of thoughtful and imaginative contemporary literature essential to a vital and diverse culture. Graywolf has published significant books of poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and translations for over 30 years, and has become one of the leading literary publishers in the country. It was founded in 1974 in Port Townsend, Washington, as a publisher of poetry, and moved to its current location in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1985. It has since expanded its lists to include fiction, nonfiction, and translation, but poetry has remained at the heart of the press. For more information, please visit www.graywolfpress.org.

About the Poetry Foundation

The Poetry Foundation, publisher of *Poetry* magazine and one of the largest literary organizations in the world, exists to discover and celebrate the best poetry and to place it before the largest possible audience. The Poetry Foundation seeks to be a leader in shaping a receptive climate for poetry by developing new audiences, creating new avenues for delivery, and encouraging new kinds of poetry through innovative literary prizes and programs. For more information, please visit www.poetryfoundation.org.



Anne Stevenson: Credit Ernestine Ruben

The Enigma

Falling to sleep last night in a deep crevasse
between one rough dream and another, I seemed,

still awake, to be stranded on a stony path,
and there the familiar enigma presented itself
in the shape of a little trembling lamb.
It was lying like a pearl in the trough between
one Welsh slab and another, and it was crying.

I looked around, as anyone would, for its mother.
Nothing was there. What did I know about lambs?
Should I pick it up? Carry it . . . where?
What would I do if it were dying? The hand
of my conscience fought with the claw of my fear.
It wasn't so easy to imitate the Good Shepherd
in that faded, framed Sunday School picture
filtering now through the dream's daguerreotype.

With the wind fallen and the moon swollen to the full,
small, white doubles of the creature at my feet
flared like candles in the creases of the night
until it looked to be alive with newborn lambs.
Where could they all have come from?
A second look, and the bleating lambs were birds—
kittiwakes nesting, clustered on a cliff face,
fixing on me their dark accusing eyes.

There was a kind of imperative not to touch them,
yet to be *of* them, whatever they were—
now lambs, now birds, now floating points of light—
fireflies signaling how many lost New England summers?
One form, now another; one configuration, now another.
Like fossils locked deep in the folds of my brain,
outliving a time by telling its story. Like stars.

—ANNE STEVENSON

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“The Enigma” appears in *Stone Milk*, Bloodaxe Books, 2007, www.bloodaxebooks.com, and is
forthcoming in *Anne Stevenson: Selected Poems*, The Library of America, 2008.