

# American Academy of Arts and Letters

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ARTS AND LETTERS ANNOUNCES 2009 LITERATURE AWARD WINNERS

New York, April 14, 2009 – The American Academy of Arts and Letters announced today the names of 17 writers who will receive its 2009 awards in literature. The awards will be presented in New York in May at the Academy's annual Ceremonial. The literature prizes, over \$125,000, honor both established and emerging writers of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. The Academy's 250 members nominate candidates, and a rotating committee of writers selects winners. This year's committee members were Allan Gurganus (chairman), Kwame Anthony Appiah, Mary Gordon, A. R. Gurney, Philip Levine, Rosanna Warren, Edmund White, and Joy Williams.

#### **Gold Medal for Poetry**

A medal given for an entire body of work.

**MARK STRAND**

#### **Award of Merit Medal for the Novel**

A medal and \$10,000 given once every six years to an outstanding novelist.

**DENIS JOHNSON**

#### **Academy Awards in Literature**

Seven Academy Awards in Literature given to honor exceptional accomplishment in any genre. This year, the awards of \$7500 each will be presented to

**RILLA ASKEW · MICHAEL COLLIER · TRACY LETTS · D. NURKSE  
MARIE PONSOT · GEORGE SAUNDERS · SUSAN STEWART**

#### **E. M. Forster Award**

\$20,000 to a young writer from the United Kingdom or Ireland for a stay in the United States. Award jury: Margaret Drabble, Alison Lurie, Paul Muldoon

**PAUL FARLEY**

#### **Sue Kaufman Prize for First Fiction**

\$5000 for the best work of first fiction (novel or short stories) published in 2008.

**CHARLES BOCK**  
for *Beautiful Children*

#### **Addison M. Metcalf Award**

\$10,000 to a young writer of great promise.

**RON CURRIE, JR.**

#### **Rome Fellowships in Literature**

A one-year residency (2009-2010) at the American Academy in Rome.

**PETER CAMPION  
ELIZA GRISWOLD**

#### **Rosenthal Family Foundation Award**

\$5000 to a young writer of considerable literary talent for a work published in 2008.

**CHRIS ADRIAN**  
for *A Better Angel*

#### **Harold D. Vursell Memorial Award**

\$10,000 to a writer whose work merits recognition for the quality of its prose style.

**SHARON CAMERON**

#### **Thornton Wilder Prize for Translation**

\$20,000 to a practitioner, scholar, or patron who has made a significant contribution to the art of literary translation.

**GREGORY RABASSA**

The American Academy of Arts and Letters was established in 1898 to “foster, assist, and sustain an interest in literature, music, and the fine arts.” Election to the Academy is considered the highest formal recognition of artistic merit in this country. Founding members include William Merritt Chase, Kenyon Cox, Daniel Chester French, Childe Hassam, Henry James, Theodore Roosevelt, Elihu Vedder, and Woodrow Wilson. The Academy is currently comprised of 250 of America’s leading voices in the fields of Art, Architecture, Literature, and Music. The Academy presents exhibitions of art, architecture, and manuscripts; and readings and performances of new musicals throughout the year, and is located in three landmark buildings designed by McKim, Mead & White, Cass Gilbert, and Charles Pratt Huntington, on Audubon Terrace at 155 Street and Broadway, New York City.