BOWDOIN PRIZES 2015–2016

TRANSLATIONS AND DISSERTATIONS IN GREEK AND LATIN

TWO UNDERGRADUATE PRIZES

(A) A Prize is offered for translation into Classical Greek.
(B) A Prize is offered for translation into Classical Latin.

(A) A prize is offered for the best translation into Classical Greek of a passage from *The Alexandria Quartet* by Lawrence Durrell.

(B) A prize is offered for the best translation into Classical Latin of a passage from *God’s Pauper* by Nikos Kazantzakis.

Copies of these passages are available in the Department of the Classics, 204 Boylston Hall.

TWO GRADUATE PRIZES

(A) A Prize is offered for an original essay in Classical Greek.
(B) A Prize is offered for an original essay in Classical Latin.

Essays offered in competition for these prizes may be on any subject chosen by the competitor, and must contain at least 1,000 words. Parts of doctoral dissertations are eligible. Essays presented for other prizes are not admissible.

RULES

All submissions must be made under a pseudonym and must conform to the requirements and general rules as stipulated on the website of the Prize Office <http://prizes.fas.harvard.edu>. Only the pseudonym should appear on the translation. Your name should be submitted in a sealed envelope with the pseudonym written on the outside.

DEADLINE

All translations and essays in Classical Greek or Classical Latin must be submitted on or before Wednesday, April 27, at the Department of the Classics, 204 Boylston Hall, no later than 5:00 p.m.

Further details on this and other prizes may be found on the website of the Prize Office <http://prizes.fas.harvard.edu>. Questions about the Bowdoin Prizes in Classical Greek and Latin may be directed to the Department of the Classics.
**Bowdoin Prize for Translation into Classical Greek**

All translations must be submitted on or before Wednesday, April 27, at the Department of the Classics, 204 Boylston Hall, no later than 5:00 pm.

From *The Alexandria Quartet* by Lawrence Durrell (London: Faber and Faber, 1968, pp. 490–491)

‘Our Egypt, our beloved country’ drawing out the words like toffee, almost crooning them. It was clear that he had nothing prepared to say — it was not a speech, it was an invocation uttered extempore such as one has sometimes heard — the brilliant spontaneous flight of drunkards, ballad singers, or those professional mourners who follow burial processions with their shrieks of death-divining poetry. The power and the tension flooded out of him into the room; all of us were electrified, even myself whose Arabic was so bad! The tone, the range and the bottled ferocity and tenderness his words conveyed hit us, sent us sprawling, like music. It didn’t seem to matter whether we understood them or not. It does not even now. ‘The Nile . . . the green river flowing in our hearts hears its children. They will return to her. Descendants of the Pharaohs, children of Ra, offspring of St Mark. They will find the birthplace of light.’ And so on. At times the speaker closed his eyes, letting the torrent of words pour on unhindered. Once he set his head back, smiling like a dog, still with eyes closed, until the light shone upon his back teeth. That voice! It went on autonomously, rising to a roar, sinking to a whisper, trembling and crooning and wailing. Suddenly snapping out words like chainshot, or rolling them softly about like honey. We were absolutely captured — the whole lot of us. But it was something comical to see Nessim’s concern and wonder. He had expected nothing like this apparently for he was trembling like a leaf and quite white. Occasionally he was swept away himself by the flood of rhetoric and I saw him dash away a tear from his eye almost impatiently.

It went on like this for about three-quarters of an hour and suddenly, inexplicably, the current was cut off, the speaker was snuffed out. Narouz stood there gasping like a fish before us — as if thrown up by the tides of inner music on to a foreign shore. It was as abrupt as a metal shutter coming down — a silence impossible to repair again. His hands knotted again. He gave a startled groan and rushed out of the place with his funny scrambling motion. A tremendous silence fell — the silence which follows some great performance by an actor or orchestra — the germinal silence in which you can hear the very seeds in the human psyche stirring, trying to move towards the light of self-recognition. I was deeply moved and utterly exhausted. Fecundated!

At last Nessim rose and made an indefinite gesture. He too was exhausted and walked like an old man; took my hand and led me up into the church again, where a wild hullabaloo of cymbals and bells had broken out. We walked through the great puffs of incense which now seemed to blow up at us from the centre of the earth — the angel- and demon-haunted spaces below the world of men.
Bowdoin Prize for Translation into Classical Latin

All translations must be submitted on or before Wednesday, April 27, at the Department of the Classics, 204 Boylston Hall, no later than 5:00 pm.


Getting up, I went to the door and stood there, gazing outside. Snow everywhere. The dawn had begun to mount from the horizon; it groped its way along the snow, sometimes disappeared, fell like a man, but then lifted itself back up again: it was holding the daylight in a dim lantern and struggling to illumine the world. I could not bear to look; it made me sick at heart. Sinking to the ground, I curled up into a shivering ball and began to bang my head against the rocky floor. Blood ran over my face, but instead of suffering, I felt somewhat calmed. I got up. A sign will appear to me, I said to myself, a sign which will make me understand; some signal from God: a bird, a thunderclap, a voice — who could tell? God’s tongue was rich and varied. He would speak to me and give some explanation of my suffering.

It had been days since I’d seen Francis, so I set off towards his shelter. I began to climb, plunging into the snow with my bare feet. I had to exert all my strength to keep from cursing. Do you call this living? I cried out to myself. Even the wild beasts have something, they have fur to wear — while we, we’re just two slugs, two snails without shells . . . I grumbled in this way until I finally reached the ridge from where Francis’s hut could be seen. I glanced in every direction. Suddenly I saw Francis at the top of a high ledge with his arms stretched out on either side so that it seemed, amid all the snow, that a black cross was nailed to the rock. Fearing that he might freeze to death up there, I rushed forward as fast as I could in order to climb the rock, take him in my arms, bring him back to his hut and then — whether he agreed or not — light a fire and revive him. But before I had scrambled even half way up the rock, I uttered a loud cry. Francis was suspended a full arm-span above the top of the ledge, hovering tranquilly, delicately in the air, his arms constantly outstretched to form a cross. Terrified at the thought that he might fly away, I exerted all my strength, climbed to the summit, and reached out to catch hold of him by the hem of his frock. But he, calmly, delicately as before, came down and sat upon the rock.

He glanced at me as though not knowing who I was, as though astonished at the sight of a human being. I took him in my arms and stumbled down the ledge, falling and pulling myself up again until I was completely exhausted. But I managed to reach his shelter. I made a fire, brought Francis next to the hearth, and began to massage him vigorously in order to thaw out his blood. Little by little he came back to life.