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**SASHA DUGDALE RECEIVES THE MLA’S LOIS ROTH AWARD FOR HER
TRANSLATION OF MARIA STEPANOVA’S *IN MEMORY OF MEMORY*; JENNIFER
GROTZ AND PIOTR SOMMER AND MARIANA PAST AND BENJAMIN
HEBBLETHWAITE RECEIVE HONORABLE MENTIONS**

New York, NY – 7 December 2022 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced it is presenting its fifteenth Lois Roth Award for a translation of a literary work to Sasha Dugdale, of West Sussex, United Kingdom, for her translation of Maria Stepanova’s *In Memory of Memory: A Romance*, published by New Directions. An honorable mention will be given to Jennifer Grotz, professor of English at the University of Rochester, and Piotr Sommer, of Sulejówek, Poland, for their translation of Jerzy Ficowski’s *Everything I Don’t Know: Selected Poems*, published by World Poetry Books, and to Mariana Past, associate professor of Spanish at Dickinson College, and Benjamin Hebblethwaite, associate professor in Haitian Creole and Haitian and francophone studies at the University of Florida, for their translation of Michael-Rolph Trouillot’s *Stirring the Pot of Haitian History*, published by Liverpool University Press. The late Lois W. Roth worked for the United States Information Agency as an advocate for the use of literary study as a means of understanding foreign cultures.

The Lois Roth Award for a translation of a literary work is one of nineteen prizes that will be presented on 6 January 2023, during the association’s annual convention, to be held in San Francisco. The prize is awarded annually for a translation into English of a book-length literary work. From 1999 until 2016, the prize was offered biennially, alternating years with the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prize for a Translation of a Literary Work. The two prizes are now both offered annually. The members of this year’s selection committee were Thomas Oliver Beebee (Penn State Univ, University Park); Efrain Kristal (Univ. of California, Los Angeles), cochair; Luiza Moreira (Binghamton Univ., State Univ. of New York), cochair; C. P. Haun Saussy (Univ. of Chicago); and Sherry Simon (Concordia Univ.).

The selection committee’s citation for the winning translation reads:

Maria Stepanova’s *In Memory of Memory: A Romance* is a singular reflection on memory and the Russian past, offering a story of multiple impossibilities, of elusive histories and fruitless clues, and of buried evidence scattered like the “sekretiki” of the author’s childhood. Fragments of family history are interwoven with reflections by a dazzling array of Russian and European authors, their words gathered with the same precious care as that given to the relics of past lives. Sasha Dugdale’s translation is a living text, the work of a poet, as attuned to the modernist voices of Mandelstam and Akhmatova as to those of Sebald and Barthes, flowing with admirable rhythm and a stunning breadth of vocabulary. In Dugdale’s hands, sentence after sentence is quotable, the shadows of the irretrievable past rippling through a complex, many-layered landscape.

The committee’s citation for Grotz and Sommer’s work reads:

In *Everything I Don't Know*, Jennifer Grotz and Piotr Sommer translate selections of the poetry published by Jerzy Ficowski from 1957 to 2006, offering an excellent representation of the development of his poetic voice. This slim, impressive volume opens a window into the achievement of a poet who treated the traumas and joys of the twentieth century with disconcerting clarity. Ficowski writes about a drop of water, a stove burner, one single louse, or a bird's flight yet succeeds in evoking immense historical loss, cultural resilience against the odds, and at times also the sheer pleasure of being alive. In a thoughtful afterword, Sommer explains that Ficowski's inventiveness with language makes him a translator's nightmare. Their nightmare is our luck.

The committee's citation for Past and Hebblethwaite's translation reads:

The late historian and anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot explored the inescapable weight of Haiti's history in several books, but *Stirring the Pot of Haitian History* is something different, a daring attempt to strip away the mythology of Haiti's founders, who appear as flawed heroes, not diminished but inserted into an analysis of a durably divided society. Originally published in 1977, *Stirring the Pot* was one of the first nonfiction books to be written in Haitian Kreyòl. Trouillot's prose glints with the malicious punning, proverbs, allusions, and abrupt transitions of Haitian oral culture: satirical sketches and allegories are interspersed with adages worthy of Mao's *Little Red Book*. Mariana Past and Benjamin Hebblethwaite have rendered this unprecedented verbal performance sharply, vigorously, and convincingly, giving English-language readers a glimpse into the modern founding of a literary language.

The Modern Language Association of America and its over 20,000 members in 100 countries work to strengthen the study and teaching of languages and literature. Founded in 1883, the MLA provides opportunities for its members to share their scholarly findings and teaching experiences with colleagues and to discuss trends in the academy. The MLA sustains one of the finest publication programs in the humanities, producing a variety of publications for language and literature professionals and for the general public. The association publishes the *MLA International Bibliography*, the only comprehensive bibliography in language and literature, available online. The MLA Annual Convention features meetings on a wide variety of subjects. More information on MLA programs is available at www.mla.org.

The Lois Roth Award is presented under the auspices of the MLA's Committee on Honors and Awards. Other awards sponsored by the committee are the William Riley Parker Prize; the James Russell Lowell Prize; the MLA Prize for a First Book; the Howard R. Marraro Prize; the Kenneth W. Mildener Prize; the Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize; the MLA Prize for Independent Scholars; the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize; the Morton N. Cohen Award; the MLA Prizes for a Scholarly Edition and for Collaborative, Bibliographical, or Archival Scholarship; the William Sanders Scarborough Prize; the Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize in Yiddish Studies; the MLA Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies; the MLA Prize for Studies in Native American Literatures, Cultures, and Languages; the Matei Calinescu Prize; the MLA Prize for an Edited Collection; the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prizes for Comparative Literary Studies, for French and Francophone Studies, for Italian Studies, for Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures, for Studies in Slavic Languages and Literatures, for a Translation of a Literary Work, for a Translation of a Scholarly Study of Literature, for African Studies, for East Asian Studies, for Middle Eastern Studies, and for South Asian Studies; and the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies. A complete list of current and previous winners can be found on the [MLA website](#).

While a graduate student in sociology at Columbia University, Lois Wersba Roth won a Fulbright grant to Uppsala University in Sweden, after which she worked for the American Scandinavian Foundation in New York. Her only literary translation, *Roseanna*, the first of the Martin Beck

series by Maj Sjöwall and Per Wahlöö to appear in English, was published in 1967, the same year that she began working for the United States Information Agency. While with the USIA, she lived abroad and learned Persian, Italian, and French. Her work was devoted to literary concerns, notably translations. She was instrumental in the establishment in France of the Maurice Coindreau Prize for best translation of American literature. The Lois Roth Award was established to enhance recognition of translation as a humanistic discipline. Lois Roth died in 1986. Her husband, Richard T. Arndt, and David Lee Rubin, of the University of Virginia, established the award.