

Poets & Writers

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Poets & Writers to Honor

Paul Slovak

2016 Editor's Award

Elizabeth George, Undocupoets, and VIDA 2016 Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Awards

New York, NY -- November 23, 2015 -- Poets & Writers, Inc. has announced that the 2016 Editor's Award will be presented to **Paul Slovak**, executive editor at Viking Books, a Penguin Random House imprint. The Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award will go to **Elizabeth George** (the best-selling mystery writer who established a foundation to help unpublished writers); **Marcelo Hernandez Castillo, Christopher Soto, and Javier Zamora** (organizers of Undocupoets); and **Erin Belieu, Cate Marvin, and Ann Townsend** (cofounders of VIDA: Women in Literary Arts).

"The honorees embody Poets & Writers' values: service, inclusivity, integrity, and excellence," said **Susan Isaacs**, chair of the Poets & Writers Board of Directors and chair of the Awards Selection Committee. The committee, which is comprised of writers and publishing professionals who sit on the organization's Board of Directors or Emeritus Board, solicits nominations from a wide range of writers, publishers, editors, agents, and others.

"We were inspired by Elizabeth George, whose quiet generosity to other writers is an exemplary form of service, and Paul Slovak, whose dedication to literature and to excellence is unsurpassed in the industry," said Isaacs. Noting that the committee has selected one individual and two groups of writers--rather than three individuals, as in years past--to receive the Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award, Isaacs said, "The committee was inspired by these groups' determination to ensure that our culture become more inclusive. And, by honoring the founders of Undocupoets and VIDA--writers who joined together to ensure that other writers' voices can be heard--we also point to and elevate the importance of community. While writing is usually a solitary pursuit, the vitality of the literary community relies upon collaboration."

The Editor's Award

The Editor's Award has been given each year since 2009 to a book editor who has made an outstanding contribution to the publication of poetry or literary prose over a sustained period of time. This year's recipient, Viking Penguin vice president and executive editor **Paul Slovak**, richly deserves the honor. Authors he has worked with include T.C. Boyle, Geraldine Brooks, Susan Choi, Roddy Doyle, Elizabeth Gilbert, Terrance Hayes, A. M. Homes, Sue Monk Kidd, William Kennedy, Stewart O'Nan, Rebecca Solnit, Amor Towles, and William T. Vollmann, to name just a few.

Books he has edited have garnered some of the country's most coveted awards: the Pulitzer Prize (for Carl Dennis's poetry collection *Practical Gods*), the National Book Award (for William T. Vollmann's novel *Europe Central* and Terrance Hayes's poetry collection *Lighthouse*), and the National Book Critics Circle Award (for Rebecca Solnit's *River of Shadows*), among others. He has edited best-sellers such as *The Invention of Wings* by Sue Monk Kidd, *Rules of Civility* by Amor Towles, *Caleb's Crossing* by Geraldine Brooks, and *The Signature of All Things* and *Eat, Pray, Love*, both by Elizabeth Gilbert. Meanwhile, his dedication to poetry has been steadfast. He has overseen the Penguin Poets series for more than fifteen years, publishing eminent poets like Amy Gerstler, Ann Lauterbach, Alice Notley, and Anne Waldman and surprising newcomers like Patricia Lockwood, Adrian Matejka, and Michael Robbins.

In receiving the Editor's Award Slovak joins a prestigious list of past recipients: Chuck Adams, Kathryn Court, Barbara Epler, Jonathan Galassi, Daniel Halpern, Kate Medina, and Pat Strachan.

The Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award

The Writers for Writers Award was established by Poets & Writers in 1996 to recognize authors who have given generously to other writers or to the broader literary community. It is named for Barnes & Noble in appreciation of the company's loyal sponsorship of Poets & Writers.

Elizabeth George is the international best-selling author of some thirty novels, including the Inspector Lynley series, many of which have been dramatized by the BBC and broadcast in the United States on the PBS program *Mystery*. Ms. George established a foundation that provides unrestricted grants to unpublished writers, extending vital financial support and encouragement to emerging writers.

Marcelo Hernandez Castillo, Christopher Soto, and Javier Zamora organized UndocuPoets to petition first-book contests to stop requiring that entrants provide proof of U.S. citizenship or permanent residency, a common practice that effectively excludes aspiring writers who are undocumented and limits publishing opportunities available to them. The petition garnered hundreds of signatures and prompted a rapid change in the guidelines of many important literary contests.

Erin Belieu, Cate Marvin, and Ann Townsend founded VIDA: Women in Literary Arts, a research-driven organization that aims to increase critical attention to contemporary women's writing as well as further transparency around gender equality issues in contemporary literary culture. The VIDA Count, an annual tally of the gender of authors published, reviewed, and reviewing in major publications, serves to "fan the flames of necessary discourse," as the group's website states. It has caused some editors and

publishers to reexamine their editorial processes and has sparked similar conversations in other disciplines.

The honorees' biographies can be found [here](#).

In Celebration of Writers

The awards will be presented at Poets & Writers' annual dinner, *In Celebration of Writers*, on Tuesday evening, March 22, 2015, at 583 Park Avenue in New York City. The chair of this year's event is **Brian Murray**, CEO of HarperCollins. Ms. Isaacs will present the awards on behalf of the Board of Directors. Tickets to the dinner begin at \$500 per person. The evening is expected to generate over \$450,000, with proceeds to support Poets & Writers' programs for creative writers.

Information about tickets for the event can be found [here](#).

About Poets & Writers

Poets & Writers believes in contemporary literature's indispensable value to our national culture. We focus on literature's source: creative writers.

Our mission is to foster the professional development of poets and writers, to promote communication throughout the literary community, and to help create an environment in which literature can be appreciated by the widest possible public.

Founded in 1970, Poets & Writers pursues this mission by publishing *Poets & Writers Magazine*, an award-winning bi-monthly journal; producing a website that provides trustworthy advice, information, and a lively online community for writers; administering the Readings & Workshops Program, which pays writers fees for giving readings and leading workshops throughout New York and California, as well as in eight cities outside these states; staging Poets & Writers Live, a series of events bringing writers and publishing professionals together; and presenting awards for writers including the \$50,000 Jackson Poetry Prize, the Maureen Egen Writers Exchange Award, and the Amy Award. Learn more at pw.org.

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