ARTUR SZE WINS $50,000
JACKSON POETRY PRIZE

Poet hyper-aware to fact that “we cannot act if we are asleep”

New York, NY – Poets & Writers announced today that Arthur Sze is the winner of this year’s Jackson Poetry Prize. The $50,000 prize is given annually to an American poet of exceptional talent who deserves wider recognition. The award is designed to provide what all poets need: time and the encouragement to write.

Mr. Sze is the seventh winner of the award. He was selected by three esteemed judges—the poets Reginald Gibbons, Natasha Trethewey, and C. D. Wright. In selecting Sze, the judges’ released the following citation:

Everything can happen in the teeming space of a stanza by Arthur Sze; almost everything does. The profane and the glorious are never far apart; more often than not they are contained in the same couplet. And the extraordinary invariably manifests itself in the ordinary or as he writes, “Revelation never comes as a fern uncoiling/a frond in mist; it comes when I trip on a root, slap a mosquito on my arm.” Sze specializes in the serial or linked poem. He specializes in irresoluble contradictions and the simultaneity of their circumstance. He is deft with improbable metamorphoses. He is undeterred
from the uninflected actual, “When//Robin’s coworkers were terminated, she
left/ her communications job to groom horses.” Little escapes his attention, be
it a particular mushroom camouflaged in the forest floor or light lifting off the
length of a power line while a sous-chef slices ginger and scallions. All that is
teeming is specific and nothing is unrelated. His “mind aligns such slivers.”
Sze is hyper-awake to a chance that a petal may tip the balance of life; to the
fact that “we cannot act if we are asleep.” Through eight collections of poetry,
translations of Chinese poetry and the recently edited *Chinese Writers on
Writing*, Arthur Sze has proven to be one of our most patient, painstaking, and
prepared observers. The impression of land and sky on mind and mind on the
mess we tend to make of things is seldom brought to such an exquisite degree
of awareness. In exacting language, Sze has brought his gleaming perceptions
and looming concerns to a rare quality of order.

Sze is the author of eight books of poetry, including *The Ginkgo Light, Quipu, The Redshifting
Web*, and *Archipelago*. A new collection, *Compass Rose*, is forthcoming from Copper Canyon
Press in 2014. He is also a translator and editor and has published *The Silk Dragon: Translations
from the Chinese* and edited *Chinese Writers on Writing*. His previous awards include a Lannan
Literary Award, a Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Writers’ Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and
two National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing fellowships. A professor emeritus at the
Institute of American Indian Arts, Sze lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico and is a Chancellor of the
Academy of American Poets.

A reading and reception will be held in New York City on May 15, at which time the award will
be officially presented to Mr. Sze. For more information contact rschuder@pw.org.

The Jackson Poetry Prize, which is awarded by Poets & Writers, is made possible by a donation
from the Liana Foundation and named for the John and Susan Jackson family. It is one of the
most substantial awards given to an American poet. There is no application process; poets are
nominated by a panel of their peers who remain anonymous. Previous recipients of the Jackson
Poetry Prize are Henri Cole (2012), James Richardson (2011), Harryette Mullen (2010),
Linda Gregg (2009), Tony Hoagland (2008), and Elizabeth Alexander (2007).

About Poets & Writers

Poets & Writers is the nation’s largest nonprofit literary organization serving creative writers.
Founded in 1970, the organization’s 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.

Poets & Writers accomplishes its mission through *Poets & Writers Magazine*, an award-winning
bimonthly publication; pw.org, a website that provides trustworthy advice, information, and a
lively online community for writers; Readings/Workshops, which pays writers fees for giving
readings and leading workshops throughout New York and California, as well as in eight cities
outside those states; and by sponsoring awards that honor and encourage writers. In addition to
the Jackson Poetry Prize, Poets & Writers sponsors the Maureen Egen Writers Exchange Award,
and the Amy Award. Learn more at pw.org.

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