

THE 2019 JAN MICHALSKI PRIZE FOR LITERATURE

Montricher, 4 December 2019

The 2019 Jan Michalski Prize has been awarded to Zeruya Shalev for her novel *Douleur* (Gallimard, 2017; published in English as *Pain: A Novel*, Other Press, 2019). The jury hailed '*a dizzying novel in which the author explores the physiological and emotional territories of suffering, where the characters' past and present are inextricably linked. Zeruya Shalev is a singular writer whose prose, both fluid and tense, sharp and poetic, gives us a narrative that is delicate in its violence, a tale of obstinate love involving several generations. A story of personal heartbreak, moving through layer upon layer as it adheres closely to the development of Israeli society, Shalev's book also represents the novel as the scar tissue of a country.*'

The prize will be officially awarded during a ceremony on Wednesday 4 December 2019 at 11 am at the Jan Michalski Foundation for Writing and Literature in Montricher, Switzerland.



Born in 1959 at Kibbutz Kinneret in Galilee, the Israeli writer Zeruya Shalev lived in Tel Aviv and later Jerusalem, where she earned a degree in Bible studies. She currently lives and works in Haifa. Her writing includes both poetry, fiction and two children's books. Her 1997 novel *Love Life* (Grove Atlantic, 2001, for the English translation) is the autopsy of a devastating and subversive affair between a young married woman and her father's boyhood friend; it stirred up controversy in Israel and went on to be a great critical and commercial success internationally. Her next book, *Husband and Wife* (Grove Atlantic, 2003), was also a best seller. Seriously injured when a suicide bomber blew up a bus in January 2004 just as she was passing it, the author remained immobilized for several months before being able to return to her writing. There followed *Thera* (Toby Press, 2010), *The Remains of Love* (Bloomsbury, 2013), and finally *Pain: A Novel* (Other Press, 2019).

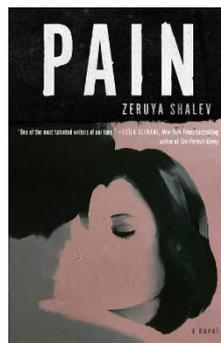
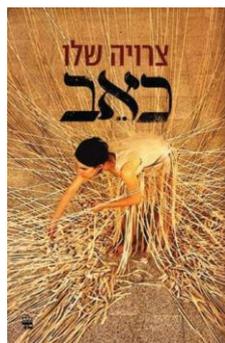
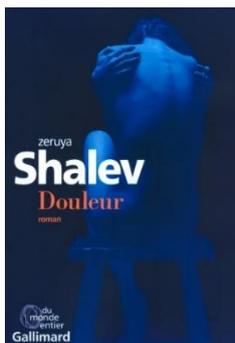
Zeruya Shalev's work has been translated into over twenty languages and awarded a number of prestigious prizes, including the 2001 Corine International Book Prize, the 2012 Welt Literaturpreis from the German newspaper *Die Welt*, and the 2014 Prix Femina étranger. Her fiction readily explores the terrain – by turns light and dark – of human intimacy, the inflections of our family and love lives, and the clashes of different generations.

Zeruya Shalev is involved, moreover, in the apolitical and areligious civic movement Women Wage Peace.

Awarded the 2019 Jan Michalski Prize for its French translation, Zeruya Shalev's latest book, *Pain: A Novel*, offers readers the dizzying and enchanting experience of an immersion in the inner world of Iris, the brilliant and devoted school principle in Jerusalem. Iris is in her forties and married to Micky, who has withdrawn into his online chess games. She is also the mother of two older children who are about to enter the world to fend for themselves. Her existence has come to a tipping point when, ten years after being seriously injured in a terrorist attack as she passed a bus just as it was blown up, Iris finds her physical pain has returned, the long-term aftermath of a deeply traumatic experience. She rediscovers, in the doctor she is consulting at the hospital's pain clinic, the first great love of her life, Eitan, who had suddenly left her when she was seventeen. Thus, another, older pain is revived, that of grief and being abandoned. Iris and Eitan counteract that pain with the rebirth of desire and the temptation to abolish time by rekindling their incomplete passion. From this nodal point Shalev examines all the nuances of mood and consciousness of a human being who is at a crossroads. The book delves into the different layers of time in Iris's life, her own childhood while her mother was losing her memory, and the childhood of her own children, while her twenty-one-year-old daughter is adrift, under the influence of a manipulative guru, and her son will soon be called up for his military service. Like a raging storm battering a skull from within, her instincts and urges collide with her social and family commitments as lines of parentage sway and strain, snag the ghosts of the past, and entangle the separate fates of the protagonists.

This sensitive portrait of a woman seeking balance and meaning encompasses a whole social landscape in which violence is seen from the inside. Although Zeruya Shalev has long steered her writing away from the Israeli-Palestinian context, *Pain* was the chance to explore with great subtlety the multiple impacts a politically rooted event has on a life – the better to return to what is universal in the human soul.

As the winner of the 2019 Jan Michalski Prize, Zeruya Shalev will receive CHF 50,000 in prize money as well as a work of art selected especially for her: *Bird and Egg*, a plaster piece by Kiki Smith, 2004

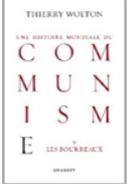
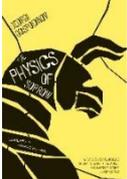


Zeruya Shalev
Douleur, Gallimard,
 “Du monde entier” imprint, 2017
 Translated into French by
 Laurence Sendrowicz
 First edition in Hebrew
 English edition:
Pain: A Novel, Other Press, 2019

THE JAN MICHALSKI PRIZE FOR LITERATURE

The Jan Michalski Prize for Literature is awarded each year by the Foundation to crown a work of world literature. An original feature of the Prize is its multicultural nature. It is open to authors from all over the world and is intended to contribute to their international recognition. The Prize is awarded for a work of fiction or non-fiction, irrespective of the language in which it is written. To make up the jury, the Foundation has invited exceptional writers who are multilingual, selected for their knowledge of various literary genres, but particularly for their cultural openness. The winner receives an 50,000 Swiss francs, offering the possibility of greater focus to her or his writing, as well as a work of art especially chosen for her or him.

THE JAN MICHALSKI PRIZE PREVIOUS LAUREATES

	<p>The 2018 Jan Michalski Prize for Literature Olga Tokarczuk, <i>Ksiegi Jakubowe</i> Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2014 First edition in Polish English edition: March 2021 Nobel Prize in Literature 2018</p>
	<p>The 2017 Jan Michalski Prize for Literature Thierry Wolton, <i>Une histoire mondiale du communisme</i> 3 volumes, Grasset, 2015 and 2017 First edition in French</p>
	<p>The 2016 Jan Michalski Prize for Literature Georgi Gospodinov, <i>The Physics of Sorrow</i> Open Letter, 2015 First edition in Bulgarian</p>
	<p>The 2015 Jan Michalski Prize for Literature Mark Thompson, <i>Birth Certificate: The Story of Danilo Kiš</i> Cornell University Press, 2013 First edition in English</p>
	<p>The 2014 Jan Michalski Prize for Literature Serhiy Zhadan, <i>Voroshilovgrad</i> Deep Vellum, 2016 First edition in Ukrainian</p>
	<p>The 2013 Jan Michalski Prize for Literature Mahmoud Dowlatabadi, <i>The Colonel</i> Haus Publishing, 2011 First edition in German translated from Persian: <i>Der Colonel</i>, Unionsverlag, 2010</p>
	<p>The 2012 Jan Michalski Prize for Literature Julia Lovell, <i>The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams and the Making of China</i> Picador, 2012 First edition in English</p>
	<p>The 2011 Jan Michalski Prize for Literature György Dragomán, <i>The White King</i> Black Swan, 2015 First edition in Hungarian: <i>A fehér király</i>, Magvető, 2005</p>
	<p>The 2010 Jan Michalski Prize for Literature Aleksandar Hemon, <i>The Lazarus Project</i> Picador, 2009 First edition in English</p>

THE JURY OF THE JAN MICHALSKI PRIZE FOR LITERATURE 2019

Vera Michalski-Hoffmann, President of the jury

The publisher Vera Michalski-Hoffmann, who has always been committed to promoting literature and the written word, founded the publishing group Libella with Jan Michalski. Since 1986, numerous authors have been brought out in French and Polish at various publishing houses, including Noir sur Blanc, Buchet-Chastel, Phébus, Wydawnictwo Literackie, and World Editions. In 2004 Vera Michalski created the Jan Michalski Foundation for Writing and Literature, whose mission is to foster literary creation and encourage the practice of reading through a range of initiatives and activities.

Alicia Giménez Bartlett

Born in Almansa, Spain, in 1951, Alicia Giménez Bartlett holds a degree in philology and graduated from the University of Barcelona. She wrote her first novel *Exit* in 1984. Since then, her essays and novels have been rewarded with many literary prizes: *Una habitación ajena* captures the tense relations between Virginia Woolf and her handmaid (Femenino Lumen Prize, 1997), *Donde nadie te encuentre* (Nadal Prize, 2011), and *Hombres desnudos* (Planeta Prize, 2015). With her detective stories featuring Petra Delicado she became one of the most famous Spanish thriller writers, translated into sixteen languages. Those investigations are adapted for television. They also earned her the prestigious Raymond Chandler Prize in 2008.

Jul (Julien Berjeaut)

The political cartoonist and author of French comic books Julien Berjeaut, known as Jul, was born in 1974. He graduated with a teaching degree in history and was teaching Chinese history when he chose to devote himself to cartooning. He has worked for a number of newspapers and magazines, including *Lire*, *Charlie Hebdo*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Libération*, and *Le Monde*. In 2005 he published his first comic book with *Il faut tuer José Bové*, a popular success that poked fun at anti-globalists. In 2012 his series *Silex and the City* was adapted for television (Arte) as an animated series. Jul has also worked as a cartoonist for various television shows (*Le Grand Journal* on Canal+, *La Grande Librairie* on France 5, *28 minutes* on Arte). In 2016 he became the new cartoonist behind the venerable *Lucky Luke* series of comic books. In 2018 Arte broadcast *50 nuances de Grecs*, inspired by his comic book of the same name.

Benoît Duteurtre

The novelist, essayist, and musical critic Benoît Duteurtre was born in 1960 in Normandy, France. He took a degree in musicology and published his first novel, *Sommeil perdu*, in 1985. *Drôle de temps* was awarded the 1997 Prix de l'Académie française, and *Le voyage en France* the 2001 Prix Médicis. *La petite fille et la cigarette*, published in 2005, has been translated into a score of languages and was adapted for the stage. In 2006 he help found the literary review *L'Atelier du roman* with Milan Kundera and Michel Houellebecq. His recent titles are *Livre pour adultes* (2016) and *En marche! Conte philosophique* (2018). He is the author of numerous music shows that have been broadcast by France 3, France 5, and France Musique, and writes for the magazine *Marianne*, as well as *Le Figaro littéraire* and *Le Monde de la musique*.

Andrey Kurkov

Andrey Kurkov is a Ukrainian writer who writes in Russian. Born in St Petersburg in 1961, he graduated from the Kiev Foreign Languages Institute, worked for some time as a journalist, did military service as a prison warder in Odessa, then became a film cameraman, writer of screenplays and novelist. He is the author of nineteen novels – including the critically acclaimed *Death and the Penguin*, *The President's Last Love*, *The Milkman in the Night* –, nine books for children, and twenty documentary, fiction and TV movie scripts. His work is currently translated into forty languages. He has recently been elected the President of PEN Ukraine.

Tomasz Różycki

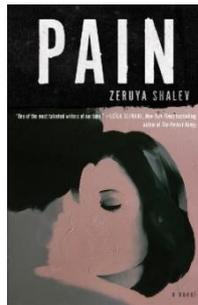
The poet, essayist and translator from the French Tomasz Różycki was born in 1970 in Opole, Poland. After taking a degree in Romance philology at the Jagiellonian University (Kraków), he joined the teaching staff at the teachers training college for foreign languages in Opole. His work, emblematic of a generation caught up in the current uncertainties roiling world politics, is published in France, Germany, Italy, Slovakia, and the United States. His long poem called *Dwanaście stacji* (*Twelve Stations*) was awarded the 2004 Kościelski Foundation Prize and was nominated for the 2005 Nike Prize. *Colonies*, translation into English of *Kolonie*, won the 2014 Northern California Book Award for Poetry in Translation. He has translated Mallarmé, Rimbaud, and Segalen, and writes for numerous reviews, such as *Czas Kultury*, *Odra*, *PEN America*.

THE BOOKS SELECTED FOR THE 2019 JAN MICHALSKI PRIZE



Antonio Iturbe
The Librarian of Auschwitz
Henry Holt & Co, 2017
Translated from the Spanish by
Lilit Thwaites

Proposed by Alicia Giménez
Bartlett



Zeruya Shalev
Pain
Other Press, 2019
Translated from the Hebrew by
Sondra Silverston

Proposed by Jul (Julien Berjeaut)



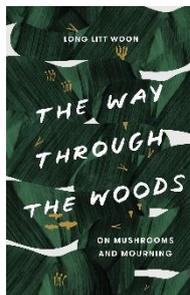
Morgan Sportès
Le ciel ne parle pas
Fayard, 2017

Proposed by Benoît Duteurtre



Francesca Melandri
Sangue giusto
Rizzoli, 2017

Proposed by Andrey Kurkov



Long Litt Woon
*The Way Through The Woods: Of
Mushrooms and Mourning*
Spiegel & Grau, 2019
Translated from the Norwegian by
Barbara J. Haveland

Proposed by Vera Michalski-
Hoffmann



Patrik Ourednik
*La fin du monde n'aurait pas
eu lieu*
Allia, 2017

Proposed by Tomasz Różycki

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