

For Immediate Release

*THE RUSSIAN VERSION*  
BY ELENA FANAILOVA  
WINS BEST TRANSLATED BOOK AWARD  
FOR POETRY

NEW YORK, MARCH 11, 2010

*The Russian Version* by Elena Fanailova, translated from the Russian by Stephanie Sandler and Genya Turovskaya, has won the 2010 Best Translated Book Award for Poetry. *The Russian Version* is published by Ugly Duckling Presse as part of its Eastern European Poets Series. The award is administered by the University of Rochester's Three Percent, an organization that promotes international literature, and was announced last night at a ceremony at Idlewild Books in New York City.

The Best Translated Book Award is the only prize of its kind to honor the best original works of international literature and poetry published in the U.S. over the past year.



Idra Novey, Chair of the Panel for the Best Translated Book for Poetry, writes: “*The Russian Version* obliterates the stereotype of what Great Russian Poetry should sound like. Fanailova has the candor and compassion of Akhmatova and a gift for striking metaphor that might bring Mandelstam to mind. She is also ruthlessly quick to fire ‘from the hip,’ as she says in the title poem, and her aim is impeccable.”

Elena Fanailova’s poems are at turns personal, polemical, and bluntly political, taking on topics ranging from the pleasures and disasters of daily life to political spectacle and aesthetic conflict. This collection, which includes work written between 1994 and the present, serves as an introduction for English readers to a poet of fearless self-scrutiny and startling range. To read through it is to watch the poet—in the words of her contemporary Aleksandr Skidan—“sweeping away the stage set and starry-eyed illusions of the 1990s and the wreckage piling up before our eyes.”

Matvei Yankelevich of Ugly Duckling Presse says: “It’s a great honor to receive this award—it’s a wonderful public recognition of Genya and Stephanie’s courage in taking on the imposing task (so often deemed ‘impossible’) of translating a great poet. Elena Fanailova’s work is so particularly Russian, and—to the translators’ credit—doesn’t become any less so in this ‘version.’ The years of translating, the many months of editing, the myriad

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proofs and detailed discussions, all the volunteer labor from proofreading and publicizing to assembling the wraps over the covers, all of the care and concern—all of it feels just that much more rewarding now. We hope that the award will bring attention to *The Russian Version* and the other books in our Eastern European Poets Series; but, more importantly, it affirms the importance of UDP's mission, shared by many other small independent presses, to invest our energies in publishing and promoting literature from beyond our geographic and linguistic boundaries. We should all be grateful to the judges who gave of their time and to the people at Three Percent (and other organizations involved) for shining a little light on literary translation, if only once a year."

Elena Fanailova is a poet and journalist who has also worked as a doctor and as a university teacher. Currently, Fanailova is a host of the radio program *Far from Moscow* that covers various topics from the Beslan siege to new Russian prose for Radio Liberty. *The Russian Version* is Elena Fanailova's the first full-length collection in English translation.

Genya Turovskaya emigrated to the U.S. from the Ukraine and is a highly respected poet in her own right. Stephanie Sandler is a translator and professor at Harvard's Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies.

The publication of *The Russian Version* was made possible by: the National Endowment for the Arts; the New York State Council on the Arts, a state agency; and CEC ArtsLink.

The poetry judges this year were Brandon Holmquest, Jennifer Kronovet, Idra Novey, Kevin Prufer, and Matthew Zapruder. There were ten finalists for the Best Translated Book Award for Poetry.

The winner of the Best Translated Book Award for Fiction, *The Confessions of Noa Weber* by Gail Hareven, translated from the Hebrew by Dalya Bilu and published by Melville House, was also announced at last night's ceremony at Idlewild Books.

Ugly Duckling Presse is a nonprofit art & publishing collective producing small to mid-size editions of new poetry, translations, lost works, and artist's books. The Presse favors emerging, international, and "forgotten" writers with well-defined formal or conceptual projects that are difficult to place at other presses. The Eastern European Poets Series is dedicated to publishing the work of contemporary Eastern European poets in translation (often in bilingual editions), emigre authors who write in English, and influential poets of the Eastern European avant garde whose work is not widely available in English translation. The series is edited by Matvei Yankelevich.

For more information about *The Russian Version*, visit:  
<http://www.uglyducklingpresse.org/catalog/browse/item/?pubID=9>

For more information about the prize, visit Three Percent at:  
<http://www.rochester.edu/College/translation/threepcent>

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