

Top South Korean literary recognition for Marinaj's "Teach Me How to Whisper"

The poetry collection "Teach Me How to Whisper: Horses and Other Poems," by Gjekë Marinaj, PhD., has received the 2024 Book of the Year Award from the literary journal "Lyric Poetry & Poetics."



New York City, New York Nov 3, 2024 (Issuewire.com) - The poetry collection "*Teach Me How to Whisper: Horses and Other Poems*," by Gjekë Marinaj, PhD., has received the 2024 Book of the Year Award from the literary journal "Lyric Poetry & Poetics." The journal, which represents all of South Korea's major universities, is among the country's most authoritative forums for literary culture.

"Teach Me How to Whisper" is the debut English-language collection by Marinaj, an American writer of Albanian origin who has published books in more than two dozen languages and received a wide array of literary honors worldwide as part of his dedication to cross-cultural understanding.

Co-translated by the author with poet, scholar and translator Frederick Turner, "Teach Me How to Whisper" was published by Syracuse University Press in November 2023. The book has also received Romania's "Mihai Eminescu" International Poetry Prize.

http://www.daljin.or.kr/bbs/zboard.php?id=notice&page=1&sn1=&divpage=1.&sn=off&ss=on&sc=on&elect_arrange=headnum&desc=asc&no=317

The Book of the Year Award was given to Marinaj on October 12, 2024, in the Jinhae district of the South Korean city of Changwon. The awards ceremony was hosted by the prestigious Kim Daljin Literature Museum, established at the birthplace of Kim Daljin, a major twentieth-century Korean poet. Professor Dongho Choi, a prominent poet and critic in South Korean literary culture over the past several decades, presented the award to Marinaj. Major political, academic and literary figures were present at the ceremony.

In conferring the award, “Lyric Poetry & Poetics” called “Teach Me How to Whisper” a “brilliant poetic collection” and a “work of poetic genius, where each line reverberates with the power of language, illuminating the complexity of life through the lens of intimate reflection and universal truth.”

In his acceptance speech, Marinaj said he sees the award “not as an individual achievement but as a tribute to the power of poetry to unite us. Whether in Dallas or Seoul, Tirana or Gaza, poetry is the voice of the soul reaching out to touch the unknown, to comfort the suffering, to celebrate the fleeting beauty of the world. To my mentor, former professor, and co-translator of ‘Teach Me How to Whisper: Horses and Other Poems,’ Frederick Turner, and to the prize committee, I extend my deepest thanks. You have reminded me that my words do not belong to the past but live on in the hearts of readers across oceans and continents.”

In the ceremony’s presentation remarks, Dongho Choi said, “Today we also acknowledge Marinaj’s widespread influence on poets around the world. ‘Teach Me How to Whisper’ serves as a reminder of how his style, themes and techniques have inspired countless writers, from emerging poets to literary giants, making him a truly global figure in literature.”

Members of the “Lyric Poetry & Poetics” Committee, responsible for selecting “Teach Me How to Whisper” as Book of the Year, include Professor Yoo Sungho from Hanyang University, Professor Bang Min Ho from Seoul National University, and Professor Park Duk Kyu from Dankook University.

Reflecting on literature’s personal and shared significance, Marinaj said, “In this moment, receiving this ‘Book of the Year Award’ for ‘Teach Me How to Whisper: Horses and Other Poems,’ selected from poems written over my lifetime, I think of the journey I have traveled through many landscapes of love, despair, joy, and political struggle. Each of my poems, from ‘Do Not Depart From Me’ to ‘The Paradigm of Paradise,’ carries a piece of that journey — each line is like a footstep on the path of existence. But today, standing here, I realize that my footsteps are joined by the voices of countless others, poets and dreamers, from both East and West, who have walked similar paths, asking the same questions of life and love, of justice and beauty.”

Marinaj is the author of more than twenty-five books of poetry, journalism, criticism and translation. He has received numerous literary awards in countries ranging from the Americas to Western and Eastern Europe, from Central Asia to the Asia Pacific. He also serves as director of Dallas-based Mundus Artium Press and editor of Mundus Artium journal, an organizations with more than a half-century of heritage in the promotion of the art of literary translation and international cultural exchange.

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