

Beat: Arts

Canadian writer Anne Carson, Princess of Asturias Award for Literature 2020

Poet, essayist and translator

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USPA NEWS - Canadian writer Anne Carson has been awarded the Princess of Asturias Award for Literature 2020, as announced by the jury in charge of its concession on Thursday. The jury - convened by the Princess of Asturias Foundation - was chaired by Santiago Muñoz Machado and made up of sixteen representatives of Spanish culture. Anne Carson's candidacy was proposed by José Antonio Pascual Rodríguez, member of the Royal Spanish Academy.

Anne Carson (Toronto, Canada, June 21, 1950), professor of Classical and Comparative Literature at the University of Michigan, is also a renowned poet, essayist, and translator. A bilingual edition of Safo's poems she found in a bookstore forever changed her life: "The vision of the two juxtaposed pages, one of them an impenetrable text, but of great visual beauty, captivated me and I bought the book," she says the writer. She dropped out of college twice at the University of Toronto, at St. Michael's College, mainly due to curricular demands, especially due to the mandatory nature of a course on John Milton. After dedicating herself for a time to working in graphic arts, she finished her studies in St. Andrews (Scotland), where in 1986 she obtained her doctorate with a thesis on Safo.

A specialist in classical culture and languages and in comparative literature, anthropology, history and advertising, Carson is, in the opinion of critics, one of the most exquisite and erudite writers of contemporary literature, as well as the author of a hypnotic work in the that fuses styles, references and formats, and opts for the hybrid between Greco-Latin, medieval and contemporary. For her, translation and creation are synonymous terms. She stated: "If I knew what poetry is, I would have no need to write. It is something that I fumble for in the dark," and also that "you write about what you want to write in the way that you have to." Thus she has created an exquisite world, a collage between poetry, dissertation, essay and drama, with contributions sometimes even from opera.

Already in her first book, 'Eros' (1986), Carson meditates on the nature of romantic love and erotic desire using prose fragments that intersect with the verses. Among her most admired poets are Homer, Thomas Hardy and the British Stevie Smith, whom she describes as "exalted," and considers Virginia Woolf the most important figure in the history of literature. At 42 she published 'Short Talks' (1992), a work that has been followed by the titles 'Plainwater' (1995); 'The Glass Essay' (1995); her well-known work 'Autobiography of Red: A Novel in Verse' (1998); 'Economy of the Unlost: Reading Simonides of Ceos with Paul Celan' (1999); 'Men in the Off Hours' (2000), set of epitaphs, love poems, verse essays and script sketches; 'The Beauty of the Husband' (2001); 'If Not, Winter: Fragments of Safo' (2002); 'Decreation: Poetry, Essays, Opera' (2005) (Decreación, 2014); 'Nox' (2010); 'Antigonick' (2012); 'Red Doc' [sic] (2013) and 'Float' (2016).

Lannan Prize for Poetry (USA, 1996), Pushcart Prize (USA, 1997), TS Eliot Prize (United Kingdom, 2001), PEN Award for Poetry in Translation (USA, 2010) and Griffin Poetry Prize (Canada, 2014), Anne Carson holds an honorary doctorate from the University of Toronto and has received two Guggenheim (1998) and MacArthur (2000) scholarships.

The Princess of Asturias Awards are intended to award "the scientific, technical, cultural, social and humanitarian work carried out by people, institutions, groups of people or institutions in the international arena." In accordance with these principles, the Princess of Asturias Award for Literature is awarded to "the work of cultivation and improvement of literary creation in all its genres." In this edition, a total of 28 applications from 17 countries participated in the Literature Award. Each of the Princess of Asturias Awards is endowed with a sculpture by Joan Miró - a representative symbol of the award - a diploma, a badge and the cash amount of 50,000 euros.

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