October 30, 2015—The American Literary Translators Association (ALTA) is pleased to announce the winners of the 2015 National Translation Awards (NTA) in Poetry and Prose! The award winning titles were officially announced at ALTA’s annual conference, held this year at the Tucson Marriott University Park in Tuscon, AZ from October 28-31, 2015.

This is the seventeenth year for the National Translation Award, which is administered by ALTA, and the first year to award separate prizes in poetry and prose. The NTA is the only national award for translated fiction, poetry, and literary nonfiction that includes a rigorous examination of both the source text and its relation to the finished English work. This year’s judges for poetry are Lisa Rose Bradford, Stephen Kessler, and Diana Thow. This year’s prose judges are Pamela Carmell, Jason Grunebaum, and Anne Magnan-Park. Award selection criteria include the quality of the finished English language book, and the quality of the translation.

Winner: 2015 National Translation Award (NTA) in Prose

New Waw: Saharan Oasis
By Ibrahim al-Koni (Libya)
Translated from the Arabic by William M. Hutchins (Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Texas at Austin)
Words from the judges: William M. Hutchins’ translation of New Waw: Saharan Oasis masterfully channels the poetic rhythms of Ibrahim al-Koni’s tale of a group of Tuareg, struggling with their evolution from a nomadic tribe to a settled community and the tensions that inevitably arise. Legends, fables, prophecies and tribal laws, expressed in lyrical, metaphorical language, give a glimpse into the group’s traditions and the Tuareg mythical paradise oasis, Waw.

Winner: 2015 National Translation Award (NTA) in Poetry

Breathturn into Timestead
By Paul Celan (Romania)
Translated from the German by Pierre Joris (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux)
Words from the judges: More than a monumental work of scholarship, Pierre Joris’s 40-year project in translation of the later poetry of one of the twentieth century’s most original and “untranslatable” poets is an extraordinary work of poetry in contemporary English. With seeming ease, Joris conveys the complexity and inventiveness of the original German without oversimplifying or domesticating its difficulty, its dark beauty, or the depth of its ideas. His commentary is also of great value in illuminating the background, sources and meanings of Celan’s singular voice.

Submissions for the 2016 National Translation Awards will be accepted starting in January 2016. Please visit us at www.literarytranslators.org/awards for more information.