



THE AMERICAN  
LITERARY  
TRANSLATORS  
ASSOCIATION

43rd Annual ALTA  
Conference

Sept. 30 – Oct. 18, 2020

# BEFORE EMERGING TRANSLATOR MENTORSHIP PROGRAM AFTER

ALTA**43**

# ALTA Emerging Translator Mentorships

Please join the mentees for their live virtual closing reading on October 1, 2020 at 2:00pm EST.

**2020 MARKED THE** fifth year of ALTA's mentorship program for emerging translators. The ALTA Emerging Translator Mentorship Program was founded by former ALTA Board member Allison M. Charette, and is designed to establish and facilitate a close working relationship between an experienced translator and an emerging translator on a book-length project selected by the emerging translator. This year, ALTA offered mentorships in Arabic poetry or prose, Catalan poetry or prose, poetry from Hong Kong, Korean poetry, Korean prose, Russian prose, as well as one non-language-specific, non-genre-specific mentorship. Congratulations to the 2020 emerging translators, listed in alphabetical order below!

- [Stine Su Yon An \(Korean poetry\)](#)
- [Madeline Edwards \(Arabic\)](#)
- [May Huang \(Poetry from Hong Kong\)](#)
- [Olivia Lasky \(Non-language-specific, non-genre-specific\)](#)
- [Tiago Miller \(Catalan\)](#)
- [Paige Aniyah Morris \(Korean prose\)](#)
- [Samuel Page \(Russian prose\)](#)

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## Stine Su Yon An (Korean poetry)

**STINE SU YON AN** (안수연) IS A Korean American poet and performer based in New York City. Her work has appeared in *Electric Literature*, *Black Warrior Review*, *Pleiades*, *BAX 2018: Best American Experimental Writing*, and elsewhere. She has also presented her performance work at &Now and Virtual International Exchange.

Stine pursued a BA in Literature at Harvard College as a first-generation college student and recently completed an MFA in Literary Arts at Brown University. Her work explores diasporic poetics, experimental translation, K-pop, embodied poetics, virtual performance, and counter-hegemonic modes for presenting and performing identity.

Born in Cheon'an, South Korea, Stine immigrated to Birmingham, Alabama at twenty-one months old in 1990. She grew up watching K-dramas, listening to K-pop, and speaking Korean within her extended family and the broader Korean communities in Atlanta, Georgia. She studied English in the Gwinnett County Public Schools and through American media, and spent the Saturdays of her youth learning Korean at the Korean-American School of Atlanta. While Stine has translated for most of her life, her earliest memories of formal literary translation are translating lines of Catullus and Ovid for a high school Latin class.

Stine studied Korean and German language and literature as an undergraduate at Harvard College, where she explored her growing interest in the visual arts, creative writing, and performance. After graduation, Stine worked in the greater Boston area as a researcher, technical writer, and communications manager for tech companies. She also co-organized a salon on technology and ethics, and curated art and performance exhibitions investigating the themes of work and metamorphosis.

Stine started writing poetry in 2016 while attending the Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts at Bard College. She continued her graduate studies in the Literary Arts MFA program at Brown University, where she took a literary translation workshop with the literary translator and artist Sawako Nakayasu.

For the mentorship program, Stine has been working on translating a collection of poems by the contemporary South Korean poet and comedic playwright Yoo Heekyung. Stine has been discussing with her translation mentor, Joyelle McSweeney, how best to navigate translating individual poems, while also tuning in to the collection's global themes, vocabularies, and tones. Through Joyelle's encouragement and mentorship, Stine has also started documenting and investigating the role translation and tone play in her



own poetry and performance practice. This past July, Stine collaborated with Korean American poet and translator Michael Joseph Walsh on a series of translations of Korean children's songs as a part of the 2020 Tamaas Translation Seminars.

Stine continues to be inspired by the possibilities within literary translation to query and queer languages, identities, and literatures. As an emerging literary translator, Stine looks forward to learning from contemporary Korean poets and sharing their work and poetics with a larger audience. She is honored to join the literary translation community and is excited to share her work at ALTA43, and to connect with other translators at ALTA44 and beyond!



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## Madeline Edwards (Arabic)



**MADELINE WAS FIRST** exposed to Arabic literature when her high school English teacher assigned a short story by the late Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz. She was immediately hooked. She began studying Arabic in university, receiving a Critical Language Scholarship in 2013 to spend a summer in Amman, Jordan.

Following graduation, she moved back to Amman, where she took on a job as a reporter for the news site *Syria Direct*. Working in an Arabic-speaking newsroom with Syrian journalists, she quickly improved her language skills,

gaining some semblance of a Syrian dialect along the way.

After a brief stint at English-language newspaper *The Daily Star* in Beirut, Madeline returned to Amman in 2018 to work as *Syria Direct*'s assistant editor. As part of her editorial role, she commissioned and wrote stories about everyday people and, of course, literature. Since 2019, Madeline has worked as a freelance journalist and occasional translator-for-hire. She now lives in Beirut, where she writes for a number of news outlets, mostly about Syria.

When she's not interviewing Idlib surgeons, cross-border people smugglers, or dissident Syrian authors, Madeline makes a (so far moderately successful) effort to focus on her second passion: reading contemporary Arabic literature. Luckily, Beirut is a hub for Arabic-language publishing and has dozens of bookshops. She is trying not to spend all of her money in them.

For her translation project, Madeline chose *A Green Bus Leaves Aleppo*, a short novel by Syrian Kurdish writer Jan Dost. The novel speaks through extended flashbacks to tell the story

of one elderly Syrian man preparing to leave his home city during the 2016 siege and evacuation of Aleppo. The title of the novel alludes to the now ubiquitous green buses of Syria, sent in by the government to remove remaining civilians and fighters from recaptured rebel-held territories after the dust of siege and bombardment settles.

Madeline was struck by how the novel explores the idea of displacement as violence, mirroring author Dost's own life. Since 2000, Dost has lived in exile in Germany due to fear of political reprisals for his writing. There, he continues to write in both Arabic and Kurdish despite being far from his home city of Kobani.

Madeline is thrilled to take part in this year's ALTA mentorship program, and to delve into a different kind of writing for her first serious literary project. She has enjoyed working with mentor Kareem James Abu-Zeid and learning more about the world of literary translation—which, looking back, she regrets not having the chance to study in university.

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## May Huang (Poetry from Hong Kong)

**MAY HUANG IS A** writer from Hong Kong who currently resides in Berkeley. Over the course of her ALTA mentorship, she has been translating the work of Hong Kong poet Chung Kwok-keung under the guidance of Jennifer Feeley. Although May was always passionate about literature, she did not discover her interest in literary translation until her second year at the University of Chicago, where she stumbled across a sestina Chung wrote about his mother. Chung's work and translation theory would eventually inform May's undergraduate thesis, which was awarded the university's Janel Mueller Undergraduate Thesis Prize.

Initially, translation was not only an outlet for May to combine her creative and critical work, but also a way for her to continue using Chinese while studying abroad in America. Trans-

lation has enabled her to inhabit the fictional world of a Chinese martial artist, as well as stand in solidarity with those on the front lines in Hong Kong; to imagine different worlds and better understand the one we live in. Moreover, she finds that what has sustained her commitment to translation is the community she has found along the way. She is grateful for the support she has received over the years from translation mentors such as Jennifer, whose patience, generosity, and insight have helped May become a more thoughtful translator. She is indebted to the members of Chicago's Third Coast Translators Collective, who are often among the first to read drafts of her translations. An integral part of May's translation process also involves corresponding with Chung, whose feedback and encouragement remind her that



translation is ultimately a way to build meaningful connections.

Indeed, at a time when travelling is impossible and transatlantic relationships are fraught, translation helps us cross borders and reconcile differences. Over the past few months, May has found solace in translating poems

about travel, childhood, food, and home. Through translation, she can revisit Hong Kong's Times Square from 2001, consider the existential implications of a simple pineapple bun, and celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival from afar. Chung is a prolific writer whose poems, essays, criticism, and translations speak to Hong Kong in personal, yet deeply resonant ways. While many people around the world now ponder the future of Hong Kong, Chung's

poems allow us to remember its past and imagine its possibilities. May hopes to introduce Chung's work to a wider audience through a forthcoming anthology that she is translating in collaboration with Hong Kong scholar Tammy Ho. Today, May's published translations of Chung's poetry may be found online at *Exchanges*, *Asymptote*, and *Circumference*.

At ALTA43, May will participate in the closing reading as well as a panel entitled *Translating Hong Kong: A City In Between*. She commends the ALTA staff for their organizational efforts and looks forward to "meeting" everyone at the virtual conference! Apart from translating, May also enjoys writing poems, reviewing books, and constructing crosswords. You can read more of her work at [mayhuang.com](http://mayhuang.com).

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## Olivia Lasky (Non-language-specific, non-genre-specific)



**OLIVIA LASKY IS A** translator who translates primarily from Norwegian and aspires to work more extensively with Northern Sámi, Danish, and Swedish. Originally from a small town in the San Francisco Bay Area, she currently lives in Oslo, where she holds a "day job" in digital marketing—and hopes to someday transition to full-time literary translation.

Olivia's lifelong love of languages and literature led her to pursue BAs in Scandinavian Studies (emphasis on Norwegian language and Sámi culture) and English (emphasis on 20th-century fiction) at UC Berkeley. She went on to receive an MA in Scandinavian Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with concentrations in Sámi and Norwegian language and literature. There, she was the recipient of two Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships to study Northern Sámi with Professor Thomas A. DuBois and Nynorsk at the University of Oslo. A translation job as a favor to a colleague (about 19th-century Scandi-

navian clothing irons, of all things) was ultimately what sparked her interest in translation. Alongside working full-time in marketing since 2013, Olivia has continued to translate in her spare time as much as possible. She has worked extensively with a wide variety of Norwegian, American, British, and Canadian writers and publishers on prose, nonfiction, and poetry projects.

Her first book-length translation, *Inside an Honor Killing* by Lene Vold, was published by Greystone Books in 2019. She has also been featured in *Words Without Borders*, and her most recent translation, Anja Røyne's *The Elements We Live By*, was published by The Experiment/Little Brown in June 2020. Most recently, she received the 2019 American-Scandinavian Foundation's Wigeland Prize for her translation of *Watch Over Those Who Sleep*, an as-yet unpublished novel by Sámi-Norwegian author Sigbjørn Skåden. Olivia is also a co-editor for *Tidsskriftet Mellom*, a Norwegian literary journal focusing on literature in translation.

Olivia has concentrated primarily on contemporary Norwegian prose and nonfiction, but her ultimate goal is to translate not only Scandinavian-language literature, but also Sámi—whether that means translating from Northern Sámi, works by Sámi authors (who write in Norwegian or Swedish), or works about Sámi people. With this in mind, Olivia's mentorship project is mainly focused on the short stories of Norwegian author Laila Stien. While she isn't of Sámi descent herself, Stien is married to a Sámi man and has spent much of her adult life

surrounded by their culture. She often chooses to include elements of Sámi life and language in her stories, some of which specifically highlight the tensions between Norwegian and Sámi cultures, and others which bear traces of Sámi and Northern Norwegian influence. She is also working on translating the poetry of two of Norway's poetic "heroes": Tor Ulven and Jan Erik Vold.

Olivia is thrilled to work with and learn from Bill Johnston and excited to meet fellow translators at the ALTA conference. She is incredibly grateful for this opportunity and confident that participating in the Emerging Translator Mentorship Program will be a key element in her growth as a translator.

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## Tiago Miller (Catalan)

**TIAGO MILLER IS A** writer and translator based in Catalonia. Raised in the suburban outskirts of London, it was the multilingual metropolis and its second-hand bookshops that offered him a release from the suffocating conformity of televised choral services, manicured lawns, and fish-and-chip suppers.

After various wanderings around Spain, he began a BA in Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Southampton, which included a year studying Cinema and Philosophy at the Universidade de Santa Catarina. After graduating, he relocated to Moscow, where he worked as a freelance translator, followed by a move to Barcelona, where he took up a teaching post. After a break to teach in Gambia, he is now happily settled in Lleida, in western Catalonia. His translation of Catalan writer Pere Calders appeared in *Asymptote*, while his articles in Catalan on language, politics, and literature have been published in *Núvol* and *La República*.

Tiago has been delighted to work alongside Mara Faye Lethem on the first book-length translation of Montserrat Roig into English. Described as Catalonia's "first total writer," her extensive body of work as both author and journalist intertwines fact and fiction in a study of language, identity, feminism, antifascism, and (historical) memory. The eight stories contained in the collection *El cant de la joventut* present a fully developed personal and introspective prose in which memory, love, death, and female identity flow freely across spatial and temporal planes. In her exploration of both the role of women in society and her tireless championing of female writers (as opposed to women who write), Roig can be regarded as a bridge between Caterina Albert and Mercè Rodoreda, and such contemporary authors as Najat El Hachmi and Marta Orriols. This mentorship, therefore, has represented an outstanding opportunity to produce a first-class translation with the aim of finally making Roig's vivid poetic imag-



ery and depth of thought available to an English-language audience.

Ever on the side of the underdog, Tiago now considers himself Catalan by adoption. If he were asked to what he owes his deeply felt passion for Catalan, it would only seem appropriate that he quote Montserrat Roig: "Over the years I have discovered that languages choose us." If he could give his younger self any advice, it would be to relax and enjoy the ride.

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## Paige Aniyah Morris (Korean prose)



**PAIGE ANIYAH MORRIS IS A** writer and translator from Jersey City, NJ, now based in South Korea. After earning BAs in Ethnic Studies and Literary Arts from Brown University in 2016, she spent the following two years as a Fulbright grantee in Korea, where she taught English as a foreign language in the southern, sea-lined city of Chang-

won, Gyeongsangnam-do, and in the quiet farming town of Goesan, Chungcheongbuk-do. During this time, she often turned to Korean literature—and, ultimately, to translating it—as a way to more deeply engage with Korean language, society, and culture.

In 2018, she returned to the US to complete an MFA in Creative Writing at Rutgers University-Newark. Her own fiction centers Black/of color and queer women and draws on speculative and magical realist traditions, while her interests as a translator include contemporary women's stories of nonconformity, including queer identity. Her writing and translations have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Best Small Fictions 2020*, *The Margins*, *The Rumpus*, *Strange Horizons*, *Nabillera*, *Necessary Fiction*, and more.

With the support of the ALTA Emerging Translator Mentorship Program, the Literature Translation Institute of Korea,

and her mentor Janet Hong, she is currently at work on a translation of South Korean writer Kim Sehee's debut novel *Love at the Harbor*. Set against the nostalgic backdrop of Mokpo, South Korea, in the early 2000s, the novel is about the young women coming of age there, the K-pop idols they adored, the fanfiction they read and wrote in secret, and the powerful first loves they experienced with other girls. She is looking forward to ALTA43, ALTA44, and to whatever other magic lies beyond the doors this program has opened for her so far.

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## Samuel Page (Russian prose)

**SAMUEL PAGE IS A** translator and student of Russian from Los Angeles, California. He first became interested in Russian literature at Occidental College, where he read his first love, Gogol, in translation. There, in addition to Russian, he also began and continues to study Ancient Greek: both languages and literatures share a fascinating past, and both teach a newcomer to set aside their habitual modes of expression.

For his BA, Samuel completed a senior thesis project on Isaac Babel's two major short story cycles, *Odessa Tales* and *Red Cavalry*. The project focused on the cyclical composition of the collections—specifically, the ways in which each cycle's narrator figure works—often stealthily—to unify the different stories into a whole, and how the page breaks between narratives function alongside the written text. Translating various passages of Babel from a broad body of work gave Samuel his first real brush with the arduousness and potential beauty of literary translation. The challenges of that project ranged from replicating the author's economy of language and preserving ambiguities in his transla-

tions to attending to words, phrasings, and imagery that appear across Babel's oeuvre. After college, Samuel spent (most of) the 2019-2020 academic year as an English Teaching Assistant with the Fulbright program in Russia. He worked with university students in English conversation and English-Russian translation in the small town of Yelabuga. There, he was fortunate enough to engage with some of the peculiarities, joys, and frustrations that are typically glossed over in depictions of Russia.

Samuel's ALTA project focuses on some of the short stories of Maya Alexandrovna Kucherskaya. In addition to teaching literature and creative writing at the Moscow Higher School of Economics, Kucherskaya is a scholar of Russian and Orthodox history, for which she received a PhD from UCLA in 1999. Samuel worked with his mentor, Marian Schwartz, to select and translate stories from Kucherskaya's 2014 collection, *A Lament for the Departed Painting Teacher*. Much of her fiction explores the role of Orthodoxy—and, more broadly, faith—in the lives of contemporary Russians, in monasteries



and in cities, in elation and in despondency. Some of the challenges of this project included researching aspects of the Russian Orthodox liturgy and the language associated with it, as well as disentangling polyphonous passages that rely on the flexibility of Russian grammar, in order to produce the same effect in English.

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## 2020 Mentors

The 2020 mentors were **Kareem James Abu-Zeid** (Arabic poetry or prose), **Jennifer Feeley** (poetry from Hong Kong), **Janet Hong** (Korean prose), **Bill Johnston** (non-language-specific, non-genre-specific), **Mara Faye Lethem** (Catalan poetry or prose), **Joyelle McSweeney** (Korean poetry), and **Marian Schwartz** (Russian prose). These mentorships were offered by ALTA in partnership with Amazon Crossing, the A. M. Qattan Foundation, the Hong Kong Poetry Festival Foundation, the Institut Ramon Llull, the Literature Translation Institute of Korea, and the Russian Federation Institute for Literary Translation. Details about the program are available at [www.literarytranslators.org/awards/mentorships](http://www.literarytranslators.org/awards/mentorships).



**ALTA's Emerging Translator Mentorship Program** is designed to establish and facilitate a close working relationship between an experienced translator and an emerging translator on a project selected by the emerging translator. The goal of the program is for mentors to walk alongside their mentee and provide support as the mentee creates a literary translation of high caliber.

Since 2015, the program has supported twenty-six translators working from Arabic, Catalan, Chinese, French, Greek, Indonesian, Kazakh, Korean, Norwegian, Occitan, Polish, and Russian. ALTA mentees have gone on to publish books and shorter translations, and to win numerous awards and residencies.

The mentorship lasts from February to November 2021, and will conclude with a presentation at the 2021 ALTA conference in Tucson, AZ. The award covers ALTA44 conference registration, as well as travel to the conference location and on-site accommodations, up to \$1,500.

The program is open to emerging translators (someone who has published no more than one full-length work of translation) at no cost to them. While ALTA's Mentorship Program is open to all applicants, we especially encourage applications from translators of color, translators with disabilities, LGBTQI+ translators, and those who do not have an MFA or some other equivalent type of training. Non-language-specific mentorships are preferentially awarded to translators working from underrepresented or underfunded languages. Though English is the target language, the emerging translator need not live in the United States.

**“It all started with my ALTA Emerging Translator Mentorship. Really.”**

—**Joyce Zonana**, 2015-2016 Mentee,  
winner of the Global Humanities Translation Prize for  
*The Beast, and Other Tales* by József d'Arbaud



Russian prose mentor Marian Schwartz with  
2017-2018 mentee Isaac Stackhouse Wheeler

**Apply today at: [alta.submittable.com/submit](https://alta.submittable.com/submit)**  
**Applications due by**  
**November 30, 2020**

The following eight mentorships are available, offered by ALTA in partnership with Amazon Crossing, the Dutch Foundation for Literature, Literature Translation Institute of Korea, the National Arts Council of Singapore, the Taipei Cultural Center in New York, and the Russian Federation Institute for Literary Translation:

- **Non-language-specific, non-genre-specific**, with mentor Kareem James Abu-Zeid
- **Dutch prose**, with mentor David McKay
- **Korean poetry**, with mentor Jack Jung
- **Korean prose**, with mentor Janet Hong
- **Prose from Taiwan**, with mentor Mike Fu
- **Russian prose**, with mentor Marian Schwartz
- **Singaporean literature (translated from Malay, Mandarin Chinese, or Tamil)**, with mentor Jeremy Tiang
- **Singaporean literature (translated from Malay, Mandarin Chinese, or Tamil)**, with mentor Julia Sanches (open to Singaporean nationals)

For more information, visit [literarytranslators.org/mentorships](https://literarytranslators.org/mentorships) or contact ALTA Program Manager Kelsi Vanada at [kelsi@literarytranslators.org](mailto:kelsi@literarytranslators.org) with questions.