UNDERGRADUATE BOWDOIN PRIZES
2020-2021

TRANSLATIONS IN GREEK AND LATIN

TWO UNDERGRADUATE PRIZES

(A) A $5,000 prize is offered for translation into Classical Greek.
(B) A $5,000 prize is offered for translation into Classical Latin.

(A) A prize is offered for the best translation into **Classical Greek** of a passage from *Frankenstein, or, the Modern Prometheus* by Mary Shelley.

(B) A prize is offered for the best translation into **Classical Latin** of a passage from “The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action,” by Audre Lorde, in *Sister Outsider*…

Further details on this and other prizes may be obtained from the website of the Prize Office ([http://prizes.fas.harvard.edu](http://prizes.fas.harvard.edu)) or by email ([prizes@harvard.edu](mailto:prizes@harvard.edu)).

RULES

All submissions must be made under a **pseudonym** and must conform to the directions on the submission website ([http://tinyurl.com/classicsprizes2021](http://tinyurl.com/classicsprizes2021)). Only the pseudonym should appear on the translation, and the submitter’s real name should not. See submission form for details.

DEADLINE

Last day of spring classes: **Wednesday, April 28, 2021, 5 p.m.**
This deadline applies to all students graduating May 2021 or later.

Any students graduating **before** May 2021 must make any submissions by the last day of fall classes: **Thursday, December 3, 2020, 5 p.m.**

QUESTIONS?

[https://classics.fas.harvard.edu/prizes](https://classics.fas.harvard.edu/prizes)
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Thus has a week passed away, while I have listened to the strangest tale that ever imagination formed. My thoughts, and every feeling of my soul, have been drunk up by the interest for my guest, which this tale, and his own elevated and gentle manners, have created. I wish to soothe him; yet can I counsel one so infinitely miserable, so destitute of every hope of consolation, to live? Oh, no! the only joy that he can now know will be when he composes his shattered spirit to peace and death. Yet he enjoys one comfort, the offspring of solitude and delirium: he believes, that when in dreams he holds converse with his friends, and derives from that communion consolation for his miseries, or excitements to his vengeance, that they are not the creations of his fancy, but the beings themselves who visit him from the regions of a remote world. This faith gives a solemnity to his reveries that render them to me almost as imposing and interesting as truth.

Our conversations are not always confined to his own history and misfortunes. On every point of general literature he displays unbounded knowledge, and a quick and piercing apprehension. His eloquence is forcible and touching; nor can I hear him, when he relates a pathetic incident, or endeavours to move the passions of pity or love, without tears. What a glorious creature must he have been in the days of his prosperity, when he is thus noble and godlike in ruin! He seems to feel his own worth, and the greatness of his fall.

‘When younger,’ said he, ‘I believed myself destined for some great enterprise. My feelings are profound; but I possessed a coolness of judgment that fitted me for illustrious achievements. This sentiment of the worth of my nature supported me, when others would have been oppressed; for I deemed it criminal to throw away in useless grief those talents that might be useful to my fellow-creatures. When I reflected on the work I had completed, no less a one than the creation of a sensitive and rational animal, I could not rank myself with the herd of common projectors. But this thought, which supported me in the commencement of my career, now serves only to plunge me lower in the dust. All my speculations and hopes are as nothing; and, like the archangel who aspired to omnipotence, I am chained in an eternal hell. My imagination was vivid, yet my powers of analysis and application were intense; by the union of these qualities I conceived the idea and executed the creation of a man. Even now I cannot recollect, without passion, my reveries while the work was incomplete. I trod heaven in my thoughts, now exulting in my powers, now burning with the idea of their effects. From my infancy I was imbued with high hopes and a lofty ambition; but how am I sunk! Oh! my friend, if you had known me as I once was, you would not recognise me in this state of degradation. Despondency rarely visited my heart; a high destiny seemed to bear me on, until I fell, never, never again to rise.’

See the following for an open-access text of the novel:

http://www.gutenberg.org/files/42324/42324-h/42324-h.htm
2020–2021 BOWDOIN PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION INTO CLASSICAL LATIN


But within those three weeks, I was forced to look upon myself and my living with a harsh and urgent clarity that has left me still shaken but much stronger. This is a situation faced by many women, by some of you here today. Some of what I experienced during that time has helped elucidate for me much of what I feel concerning the transformation of silence into language and action.

In becoming forcibly and essentially aware of my mortality, and of what I wished and wanted for my life, however short it might be, priorities and omissions became strongly etched in a merciless light, and what I regretted were my silences. Of what had I ever been afraid? To question or to speak as I believed could have meant pain, or death. But we all hurt in so many different ways, all the time, and pain will either change or end. Death, on the other hand, is the final silence. And that might be coming quickly, now, without regard for whether I had ever spoken what needed to be said, or had only betrayed myself into small silences, while I planned someday to speak, or waited for someone else’s words. And I began to recognize a source of power within myself that comes from the knowledge that while it is most desirable not to be afraid, learning to put fear into a perspective gave me great strength.

I was going to die, if not sooner then later, whether or not I had ever spoken myself. My silences had not protected me. Your silence will not protect you. But for every real word spoken, for every attempt I had ever made to speak for those truths for which I am still seeking, I had made contact with other women while we examined the words to fit a world in which we all believed, bridging out differences. And it was the concern and caring of all those women which gave me strength and enabled me to scrutinize the essentials of my living.

See entire speech for context:
https://classics.fas.harvard.edu/files/classics/files/bowdoin_latin_silenceintoaction.pdf?m=1605040716