

# UNDERGRADUATE BOWDOIN PRIZES 2021-2022

TRANSLATIONS IN GREEK AND LATIN

## TWO UNDERGRADUATE PRIZES

(A) A \$3,500 prize is offered for translation into Classical Greek.

(B) A \$3,500 prize is offered for translation into Classical Latin.

(A) A prize is offered for the best translation into **Classical Greek** of a passage from *No Name in the Street*, by James Baldwin.

(B) A prize is offered for the best translation into **Classical Latin** of a passage from *The Invention of Love*, by Tom Stoppard.

Further details on this and other prizes may be obtained from the website of the Prize Office (<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 (<https://tinyurl.com/classicsprizes2022>). Only the pseudonym should appear on the translation; the submitter's real name should not. See submission form for details.

## DEADLINE

Last day of spring classes: **Wednesday, April 27, 2022, 5 p.m.**

This deadline applies to all students graduating May 2022 or later.

## QUESTIONS?

<https://classics.fas.harvard.edu/prizes>  
[classics@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:classics@fas.harvard.edu)

## **BOWDOIN PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION INTO CLASSICAL GREEK**

**James Baldwin, *No Name in the Street* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), pp. 88-90:**

For a very long time...America prospered—or seemed to prosper: this prosperity cost millions of people their lives. Now, not even the people who are the most spectacular recipients of the benefits of this prosperity are able to endure these benefits: they can neither understand them nor do without them, nor can they go beyond them. Above all, they cannot, or dare not, assess or imagine the price paid by their victims, or subjects, for this way of life, and so they cannot afford to know why the victims are revolting. They are forced, then, to the conclusion that the victims--the barbarians—are revolting against all established civilized values—which is both true and not true—and, in order to preserve these values, however stifling and joyless these values have caused their lives to be, the bulk of the people desperately seek out representatives who are prepared to make up in cruelty what both they and the people lack in conviction.

This is a formula for a nation's or a kingdom's decline, for no kingdom can maintain itself by force alone. Force does not work the way its advocates seem to think it does. It does not, for example, reveal to the victim the strength of his adversary. On the contrary, it reveals the weakness, even the panic of his adversary, and this revelation invests the victim with patience. Furthermore, it is ultimately fatal to create too many victims. The victor can do nothing with these victims, for they do not belong to him, but—to the victims. They belong to the people he is fighting. The people know this, and as inexorably as the roll call—the honor roll—of victims expands, so does their will become inexorable: they resolve that these dead, their brethren, shall not have died in vain. When this point is reached, however long the battle may go on, the victor can never be the victor: on the contrary, all his energies, his entire life, are bound up in a terror he cannot articulate, a mystery he cannot read, a battle he cannot win—he has simply become the prisoner of the people he thought to cow, chain, or murder into submission.

Power, then, which can have no morality in itself, is yet dependent on human energy, on the wills and desires of human beings. When power translates itself into tyranny, it means that the principles on which that power depended, and which were its justification, are bankrupt. When this happens, and it is happening now, power can only be defended by thugs and mediocrities—and seas of blood. The representatives of the *status quo* are sickened and divided, and dread looking into the eyes of their young; while the excluded begin to realize, having endured everything, that they *can* endure everything. They do not know the precise shape of the future, but they know that the future belongs to them. They realize this—paradoxically—by the failure of the moral energy of their oppressors and begin, almost instinctively, to forge a new morality, to create the principles on which a new world will be built.

## BOWDOIN PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION INTO CLASSICAL LATIN

**Tom Stoppard, *The Invention of Love* (New York: Faber and Faber, 1997), pp. 23-24:**

**Jowett** ...The textual critics have spoken. Death to wild faces emerging in the nominative. Long live the transitive *emersere* raising up in the accusative unqualified faces from the white foaming waters, of the *freti*, something watery like a channel. Never mind that we already have so many watery words that the last thing we need is another – here we are: “*freti* for *feri* is an easy correction, as r, t, tr, rt are among the letters most frequently confounded in the manuscripts.” Well, Munro is entitled to concur with everybody who amends the manuscripts of Catullus according to his taste and calls his taste his conjectures – it’s a futile business suitable to occupy the leisure of professors of Cambridge University. But you, sir, have not been put on earth with an Oxford scholarship so that you may bother your head with whether Catullus in such-and-such place wrote *ut* or *et* or *aut* or none of them or whether such-and-such line is spurious or corrupt or on the contrary an example of Catullus’ peculiar genius. You are here to take the ancient authors as they come from a reputable English printer, and to study them until you can write in the metre. If you cannot write Latin and Greek verse how can you hope to be of any use in the world?

**Housman** But isn’t it of use to establish what the ancient authors really wrote?

**Jowett** It would be on the whole desirable rather than undesirable and the job was pretty well done, where it could be done, by good scholars dead these hundred years and more. For the rest, certainty could only come from recovering the autograph. This morning I had cause to have typewritten an autograph letter I wrote to the father of a certain undergraduate. The copy as I received it asserted that the Master of Balliol had a solemn duty to stamp out unnatural mice. In other words, anyone with a secretary knows that what Catullus really wrote was already corrupt by the time it was copied twice, which was about the time of the first Roman invasion of Britain: and the earliest copy that has come down to *us* was written about 1,500 years after that. Think of all those secretaries! – corruption breeding corruption from papyrus to papyrus, and from the last disintegrating scrolls to the first new-fangled parchment books, with a thousand years of copying-out still to come, running the gauntlet of changing forms of script and spelling, and absence of punctuation – not to mention mildew and rats and fire and flood and Christian disapproval to the brink of extinction as what Catullus really wrote passed from scribe to scribe, this one drunk, that one sleepy, another without scruple, and of those sober, wide-awake and scrupulous, some ignorant of Latin and some, even worse, fancying themselves better Latinists than Catullus – until! – finally and at long last – mangled and tattered like a dog that has fought its way home, there falls across the threshold of the Italian Renaissance the sole surviving witness to thirty generations of carelessness and stupidity: the *Verona Codex* of Catullus.