

**JOHN WOODSWORTH AND ARKADI KLIOUTCHANSKI, TRANSLATORS OF
SOFIA ANDREEVNA TOLSTAYA'S *MY LIFE*, TO RECEIVE THE MLA'S LOIS ROTH
AWARD FOR A TRANSLATION OF A LITERARY WORK; JONATHAN TITTLER TO
RECEIVE HONORABLE MENTION**

New York, NY – 5 December 2011 – The Modern Language Association of America today announced it is presenting its seventh biennial Lois Roth Award for a Translation of a Literary Work. The winners are John Woodsworth, of the University of Ottawa, and Arkadi Klioutchanski, of the University of Ottawa, for their translation of Sofia Andreevna Tolstaya's *My Life*, published by the University of Ottawa Press. Jonathan Tittler, of Rutgers University, has received honorable mention for his translation of Manuel Zapata Olivella's *Changó, the Biggest Badass*, published by Texas Tech University Press. The late Lois W. Roth worked for the United States Information Agency as an advocate for the use of literary study as a means of understanding foreign cultures.

Established in 1997, the Lois Roth Award is one of eighteen that will be presented on 7 January 2012, during the association's annual convention, to be held in Seattle. The members of the selection committee were Jane Chance (Rice Univ.); Michael Harney (Univ. of Texas); Elizabeth Horan (Arizona State Univ.), chair; Catharine S. Nepomnyashchy (Barnard Coll.); and Janet L. Smarr (Univ. of California, San Diego). The committee's citation for the winning book reads:

My Life is a twelve-hundred-page memoir and a tour de force. The first-time publication of the complete autobiography in English and Russian reverses a trend, dating from

Tolstoy's life and his death in 1910, of denigrating and dismissing Sofia Tolstaya, his wife of over fifty years. The polished translation develops throughout, with rich, fascinating detail, into a compulsively readable, tumultuous life and times of Sofia Tolstaya. John Woodsworth and Arkadi Klioutchanski make choices that reveal the subject's unique voice as shaped by her intimate knowledge of French and German literatures and by her experience as a wife and mother who wrote and helped her husband with his writing. Harmoniously integrated throughout the meticulous translation are an introduction, notes, and indexes, which are a model of clarity. This text will easily become a standard reference work for all future studies of Tolstoy and his era.

John Woodsworth has more than forty-five years of experience in Russian-English translation, from classical poetry to modern short stories. He has been associated with the University of Ottawa since 1982 as a Russian-language teacher, translator, editor, and, most recently, as a research associate and administrative assistant with the university's Slavic Research Group. He has translated twenty-four books, including Vladimir Megré's Ringing Cedars series. He has also edited, coedited, or compiled eleven collections of academic articles, archival correspondence, and poetry. He has more than 180 published poem translations to his credit and almost 100 publications of his own original Russian-language poems. He has been a member of the Literary Translators' Association of Canada since 2008 and was recently admitted to the Russian Interregional Union of Writers and the Derzhavin Academy of Russian Literature and Fine Arts.

Arkadi Klioutchanski is a part-time professor of Russian language and literature at the University of Ottawa. He received a Diploma of Higher Education at the Moscow Chemical Technological Institute D.I. Mendeleev, a BA in Russian language and literature at the University of Ottawa, and an MA in Slavic studies at the University of Ottawa. He is in the PhD program in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Toronto.

The committee's citation for the honorable mention reads:

Changó, a strange and powerful novel, presented tremendous challenges to Jonathan Tittler, who consulted repeatedly over fifteen years with the author to produce this first English language version of a text that spans contemporary Caribbean and postcolonial literature. *Changó*'s length makes the project even more impressive. Tittler's fidelity to the original's highly colloquial idiom, which is often intensely specific in its Colombian expressions and phraseology, includes numerous exemplary practices, such as developing a glossary of untranslatable terms. Time and again, Tittler gets it right. His highly readable English-language rendering is a model of how to do justice, linguistically and stylistically, to Latin American literary works of the present day, intelligently handling shifting phases, numerous characters, and multiple settings, rendered in an unusual and rather poetic style.

Jonathan Tittler is a professor of Spanish at Rutgers University, Camden. He received his PhD from Cornell University. He is the author of numerous articles and three original books—*Narrative Irony in the Contemporary Spanish American Novel*, *Manuel Puig*, and *El verbo y el mando: Vida y milagros de Gustavo Alvarez Garcezabal*—and the editor of a collection of essays of literary criticism, *Violencia y literatura en Colombia*, all focused on Spanish American literature of the modern-contemporary period. Previous translations include Adalberto Ortiz's *Juyungo*, Manuel Zapata Olivella's *Chambacú: Black Slum*, Gustavo Alvarez's *Gardezabal, Bazaar of the Idiots*, Antonio Skármeta's *Love—Fifteen*, and Luisa Valenzuela's *Deathcats / El gato eficaz*. Tittler has taught literary translation at the University of Auckland, where he held the Prince of Asturias Chair in Spanish from 1997 to 2001. His current translational project is a book of nonfiction by the Colombian historian of anthropology Germán Patiño Ossa, "Black Cookstove: Cuisine and Culture in a Region of Latin America."

The Modern Language Association of America and its 30,000 members in 100 countries work to strengthen the study and teaching of languages and literature. Founded in 1883, the MLA provides opportunities for its members to share their scholarly findings and teaching experiences with colleagues and to discuss trends in the academy. The MLA sustains one of the finest

publication programs in the humanities, producing a variety of publications for language and literature professionals and for the general public. The association publishes the *MLA International Bibliography*, the only comprehensive bibliography in language and literature, available online. The MLA Annual Convention features meetings on a wide variety of subjects; this year's convention in Seattle is expected to draw 8,000 attendees. More information on MLA programs is available at www.mla.org.

Previous winners of the Lois Roth Award are Mark Harman, John Felstiner, Geoffrey Brock, Joel Agee, Edwin A. Cranston, and Adnan Haydar and Michael Beard.

The Lois Roth Award is presented under the auspices of the MLA's Committee on Honors and Awards. Other awards sponsored by the committee are the William Riley Parker Prize; the James Russell Lowell Prize; the MLA Prize for a First Book; the Howard R. Marraro Prize; the Kenneth W. Mildener Prize; the Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize; the MLA Prize for Independent Scholars; the Katherine Singer Kovacs Prize; the Morton N. Cohen Award; the MLA Prizes for a Distinguished Scholarly Edition and for a Distinguished Bibliography; the William Sanders Scarborough Prize; the Fenia and Yaakov Leviant Memorial Prize in Yiddish Studies; the MLA Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary and Cultural Studies; the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Prizes for Comparative Literary Studies, for French and Francophone Studies, for Italian Studies, for Studies in Germanic Languages and Literatures, for Studies in Slavic Languages and Literatures, for a Translation of a Literary Work, for a Translation of a Scholarly Study of Literature; and the Aldo and Jeanne Scaglione Publication Award for a Manuscript in Italian Literary Studies.

While a graduate student in sociology at Columbia University, Lois Wersba Roth won a Fulbright grant to Uppsala University in Sweden, after which she worked for the American Scandinavian Foundation in New York. Her only literary translation, *Roseanna*, the first of the Martin Beck series to appear in English, by Sjøgren and Wahlöö, was published in 1967, the same year that she began working for the United States Information Agency. While with the USIA, she lived abroad and learned Persian, Italian, and French. Her work was devoted to

literary concerns, notably translations. She was instrumental in the establishment in France of the Maurice Coindreau Prize for best translation of American literature. The Lois Roth Award was established to enhance recognition of translation as a humanistic discipline. Lois Roth died in 1986. Her husband, Richard T. Arndt, and David Lee Rubin, of the University of Virginia, established the award.