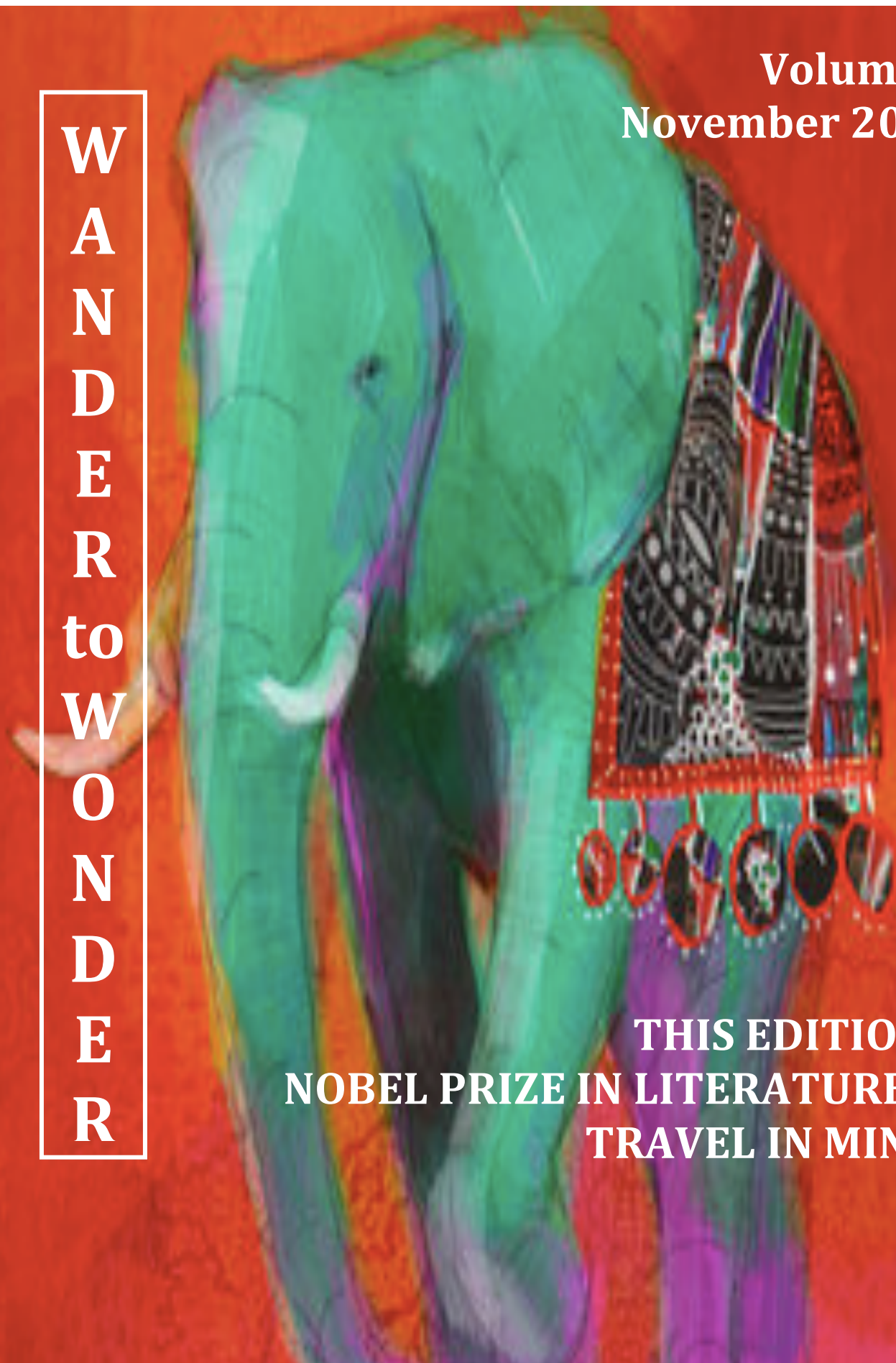


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**Volume 3  
November 2016**

**THIS EDITION:  
NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE –  
TRAVEL IN MIND**





THIS EDITION:  
NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE – TRAVEL IN MIND

# WANDER to WONDER

by MARTINA NICOLLS



**The world will never starve for wonder, but only for want of wonder.**  
**G.K. Chesterson**



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# editor's note

*Welcome to the third edition of WANDER to WONDER*

This third edition of Wander to Wonder focuses not on the physicality of travel but on the travel of the mind – through literature. Many people pack a book or e-reader in their luggage for their long journey or camping trip. Literature can transport people to other worlds, other countries, or other situations within the same city.

The impetus for writing a feature on travel of the mind and especially the Nobel Prize in Literature was the 2016 announcement of Bob Dylan as the recipient – a songwriter, a poet, and a controversial choice for many. But the Nobel Prize in Literature has always been a magnet for controversy because people's love of literature and authors is so subjective. People just know what they like, even if they don't always know why.

Until next edition, with another theme,

*Martina*

MARTINA NICOLLS



*That is part of the beauty of all literature. You discover that your longings are universal longings, that you're not lonely and isolated from anyone. You belong.*

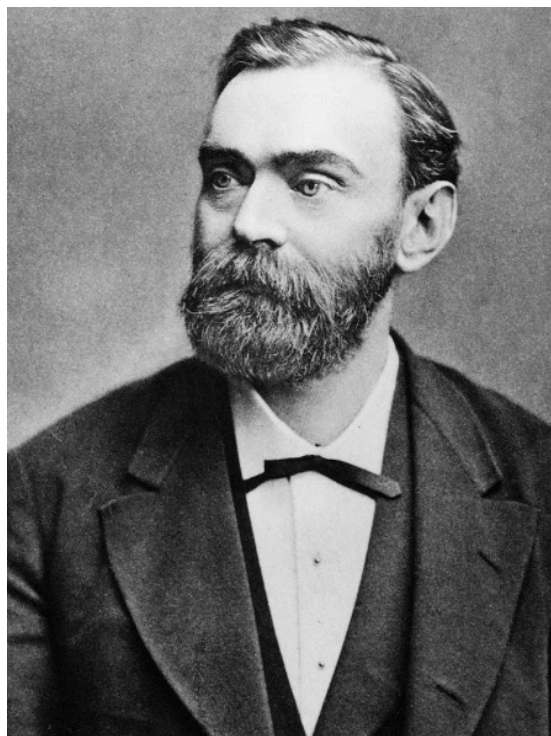
*F. Scott Fitzgerald*



# Alfred Nobel

Alfred Bernhard Nobel (1833-1896) was a Swedish chemist, engineer, inventor, businessman, and philanthropist. He studied chemistry in Stockholm, Sweden, and in 1850 he also studied in Paris, France. Despite his pacifist views, he joined his family's factory making armaments, weapons of war, with his two brothers, Ludvig and Robert. One of his inventions was dynamite.

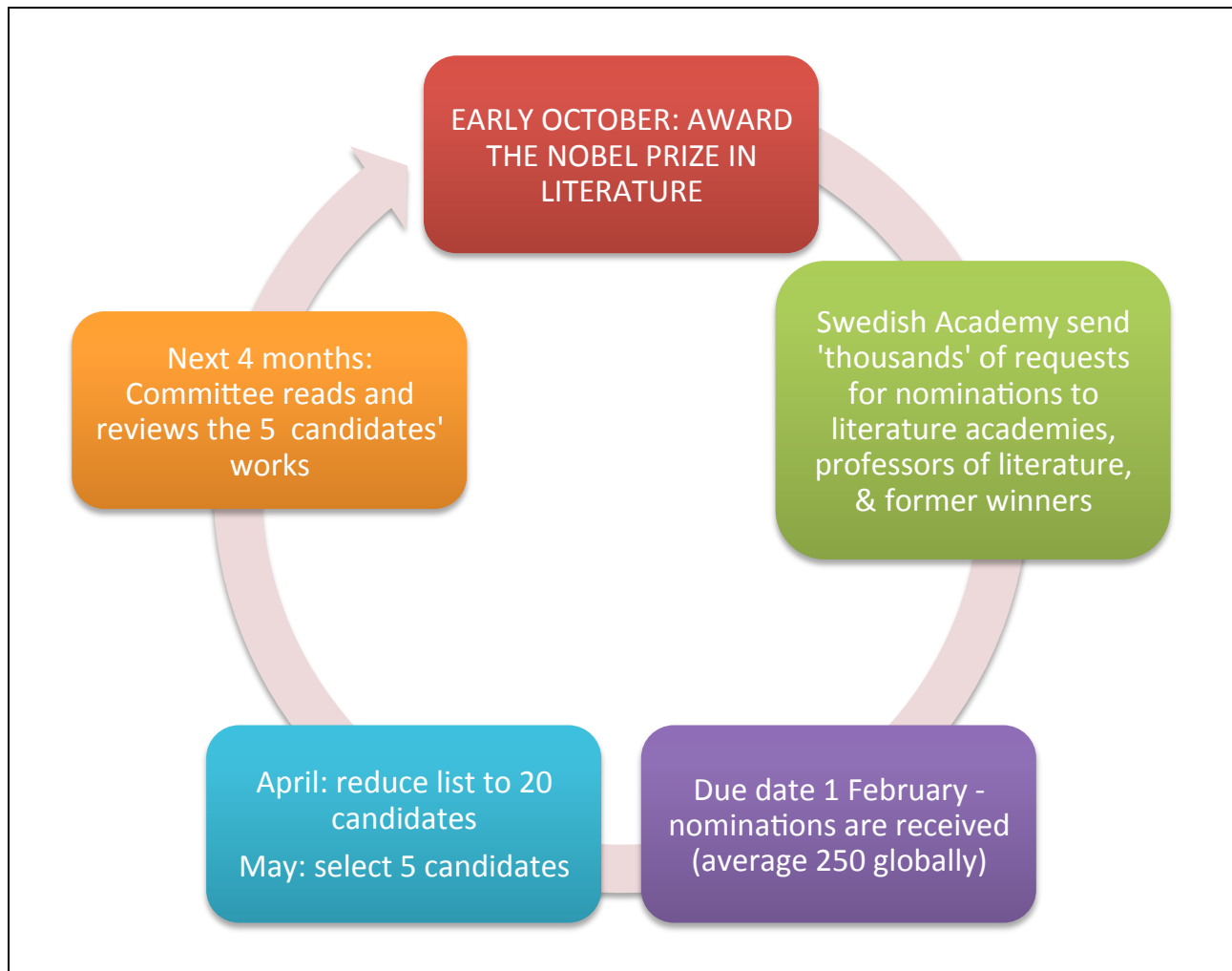
In 1888 after the death of Ludvig, several newspapers announced that Alfred had died: a French newspaper wrote 'The merchant of death is dead.' The obituary criticised him for profiting from his sales of weapons. Nobel, who never married and had no children, signed a will at the Swedish-Norwegian Club in Paris in 1895 to establish a fund to issue prizes each year, awarded annually 'without distinction of nationality.' In 1901 he created five prizes: chemistry, physics, medicine (physiology), literature, and peace. Stipulated in his will, for example, the Royal Swedish Academy, issues the literature prize, whereas the Norwegian Nobel Committee issues the peace prize. The recipients of the awards must be living at the time of the announcement.





# process of the prize

The exact wording for the issuance of the Nobel Prize in Literature is ambiguous. The prize is for 'an author from any country who has produced in the field of literature the most outstanding work in an ideal direction.' The Royal Swedish Academy awarding the literature prize originally interpreted Nobel's will as a 'body of work' rather than an individual novel, and the word 'ideal' as 'idealistic' in the strict sense – i.e. literary idealism, although this interpretation broadened over time.



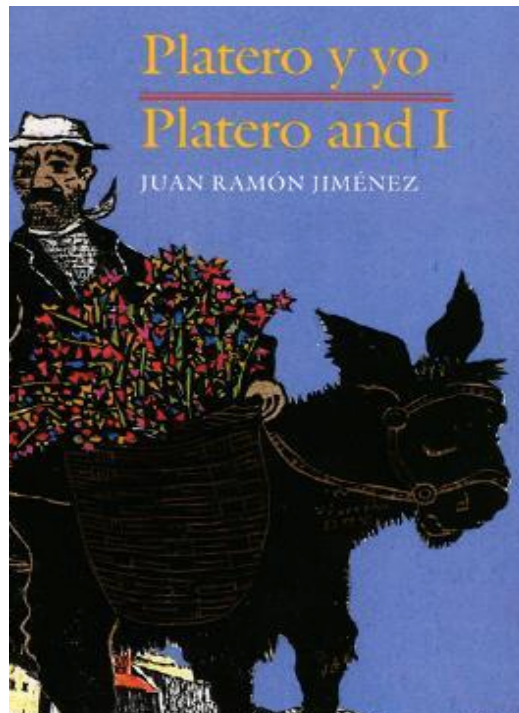


# secrecy of the prize

The Royal Swedish Academy receives nominations only from invited people – and not all of them send in a nomination. An average of 200-250 nominations are received each year. Potential candidates must be on the list at least twice to win an award, not necessarily in consecutive years (although there have been exceptions, such as Prudhomme, Eucken, Heyse, Tagore, Lewis, Mommsen, Pirandello, Buck, Russell, and Faulkner). The list is reduced to 20 names, and then 5 names.

The list is secret. The nominations in any year, and the reduced list of candidates, are kept secret for 50 years. After 50 years the lists are published on The Nomination Database for the Nobel Prize in Literature. Therefore in 2016 only the lists for the years 1901 to 1966 are available for public viewing. This secrecy makes it difficult to predict who will win because the public do not know who is on the list of the 5 short-listed authors each year.

Winners receive a gold medal, a parchment (diploma), and money. The amount of money depends on the Nobel Foundation's income that year, with the award recipient often receiving about a million dollars. It is the richest literary prize in the world.





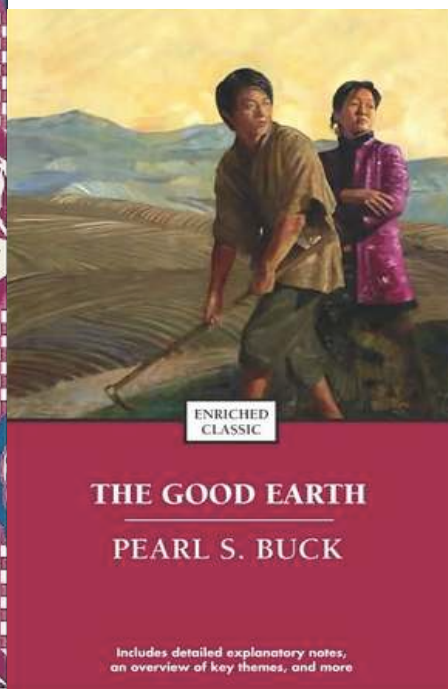
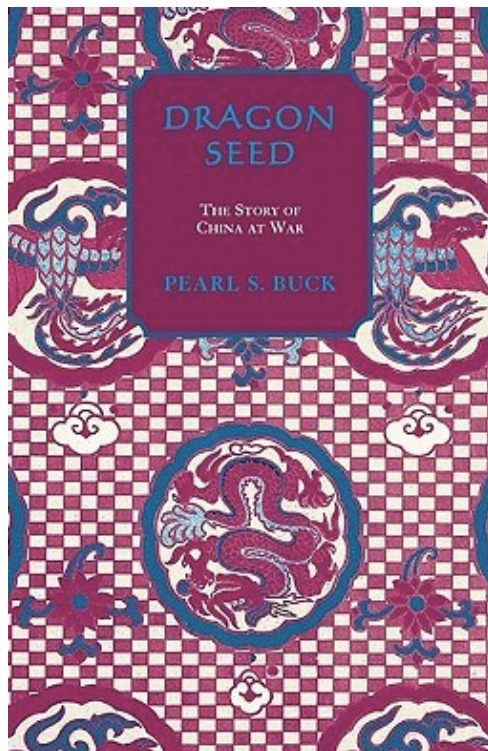
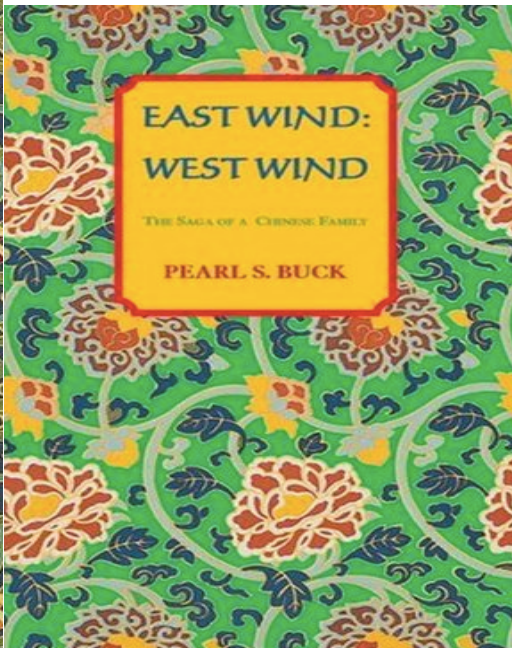
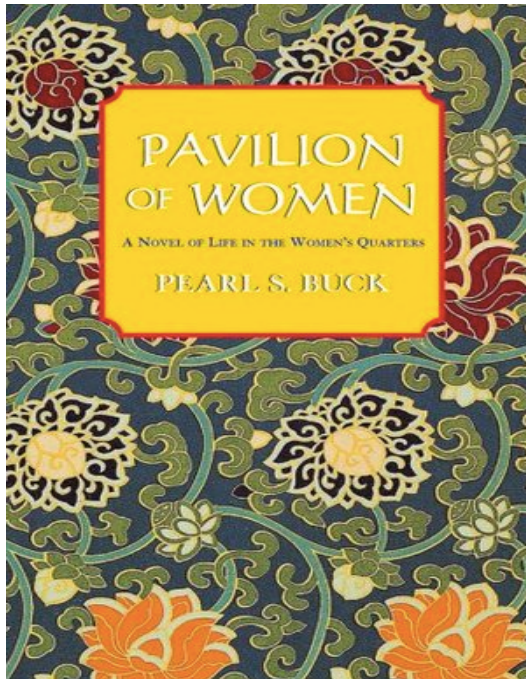
# winners: 1901 to 2016

Since 1901, the Nobel Prize in Literature has had 109 award events, issuing an award to 113 individuals (there were 4 years in which two individuals shared the award, and 7 years in which no award was given, primarily during wartime). How many winning authors have you heard of? How many authors' works have you read? Asterisks (\*) show women recipients.

YEAR	NAME	YEAR	NAME	YEAR	NAME	YEAR	NAME
1901	Sully Prudhomme	1931	Erik Axel Karlfeldt	1961	Ivo Andrić	1991	Nadine Gordimer*
1902	Theodor Mommsen	1932	John Galsworthy	1962	John Steinbeck	1992	Derek Walcott
1903	Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson	1933	Ivan Bunin	1963	Giorgos Seferis	1993	Toni Morrison*
1904	Frédéric Mistral; José Echegaray	1934	Luigi Pirandello	1964	Jean-Paul Sartre	1994	Kenzaburō Ōe
1905	Henryk Sienkiewicz	1935	None	1965	Mikhail Sholokhov	1995	Seamus Heaney
1906	Giosuè Carducci	1936	Eugene O'Neill	1966	Shmuel Agnon; Nelly Sachs*	1996	Wisława Szymborska*
1907	Rudyard Kipling	1937	Roger M. du Gard	1967	Miguel Asturias	1997	Dario Fo
1908	Rudolph C. Eucken	1938	Pearl S. Buck*	1968	Yasunari Kawabata	1998	José Saramago
1909	Selma Lagerlöf*	1939	Frans E. Sillanpää	1969	Samuel Beckett	1999	Günter Grass
1910	Paul Heyse	1940	None	1970	Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn	2000	Gao Xingjian
1911	Maurice Maeterlinck	1941	None	1971	Pablo Neruda	2001	V.S. Naipul
1912	Gerhart Hauptmann	1942	None	1972	Heinrich Böll	2002	Imre Kertész
1913	Rabindra Nath Tagore	1943	None	1973	Patrick White	2003	J.M. Coetzee
1914	None	1944	Johannes Jensen	1974	Eyvind Johnson; Harry Martinson	2004	Elfriede Jelinek*
1915	Romain Rolland	1945	Gabriela Mistral*	1975	Eugenio Montale	2005	Harold Pinter
1916	Verner von Heidenstam	1946	Hermann Hesse	1976	Saul Bellow	2006	Orhan Pamuk
1917	Karl A. Gjellerup; Henrik Pontoppidan	1947	André Gide	1977	Vicente Aleixandre	2007	Doris Lessing*
1918	None	1948	T.S. Eliot	1978	Isaac B. Singer	2008	J.M.G. Le Clézio
1919	Carl Spitteler	1949	William Faulkner	1979	Odysseas Elytis	2009	Herta Müller*
1920	Knut Hamsun	1950	Bertrand Russell	1980	Człesaw Miłosz	2010	Mario V. Llosa
1921	Anatole France	1951	Pär Lagerkvist	1981	Elias Canetti	2011	Tomas Tranströmer
1922	Jacinto Benavente	1952	François Mauriac	1982	Gabriel G. Márquez	2012	Mo Yan
1923	W.B. Yeats	1953	Winston Churchill	1983	William Golding	2013	Alice Munro*
1924	Władysław Reymont	1954	Ernest Hemingway	1984	Jaroslav Seifert	2014	Patrick Modiano
1925	George B. Shaw	1955	Halldór Laxness	1985	Claude Simon	2015	Svetlana Alexievich*
1926	Grazia Deledda*	1956	Juan R. Jiménez	1986	Wole Soyinka	2016	Bob Dylan
1927	Henri Bergson	1957	Albert Camus	1987	Joseph Brodsky		
1928	Sigrid Undset*	1958	Boris Pasternak	1988	Naguib Mahfouz		
1929	Thomas Mann	1959	Salvatore Quasimodo	1989	Camilo José Cela		
1930	Sinclair Lewis	1960	Saint-John Perse	1990	Octavio Paz		



# *pearl s. buck*





## stats: genres

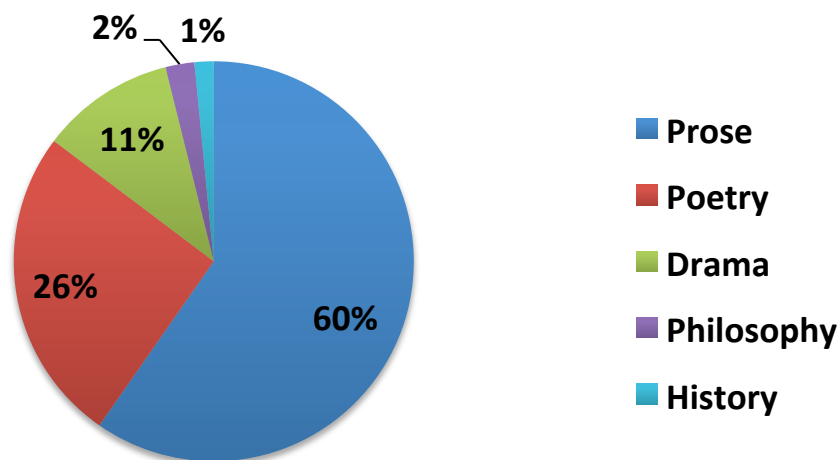
The Nobel Prize in Literature has been awarded for the following genres: 77 in prose, 33 in poetry, 14 in drama, 3 in philosophy, and 2 in historical literature. Some authors were awarded the prize for their work in more than one genre.

Generally authors are honoured for their body of work. However, there have been exceptions where an author has won for a specific novel or piece of work. These include:

1902	Theodor Mommsen, Germany	"the greatest living master of the art of historical writing, with special reference to his monumental work, <b>A History of Rome</b> "
1919	Carl Spitteler, Switzerland	"in special appreciation of his epic, <b>Olympian Spring</b> "
1920	Knut Hamsun, Norway	"for his monumental work, <b>Growth of the Soil</b> "
1924	Wladyslaw Reymont, Poland	"for his great national epic, <b>The Peasants</b> "
1929	Thomas Mann, Germany	"principally for his great novel, <b>Buddenbrooks</b> , which has won steadily increased recognition as one of the classic works of contemporary literature"
1932	John Galsworthy, Great Britain	"for his distinguished art of narration which takes its highest form in <b>The Forsyte Saga</b> "
1937	Roger Martin du Gard, France	"for the artistic power and truth with which he has depicted human conflict as well as some fundamental aspects of contemporary life in his novel-cycle <b>Les Thibault</b> "
1954	Ernest Hemingway, United States	"for his mastery of the art of narrative, most recently demonstrated in <b>The Old Man and the Sea</b> , and for the influence that he has exerted on contemporary style"
1965	Mikhail Sholokhov, Soviet Union	"for the artistic power and integrity with which, in his epic of the <b>Don</b> , he has given expression to a historic phase in the life of the Russian people"



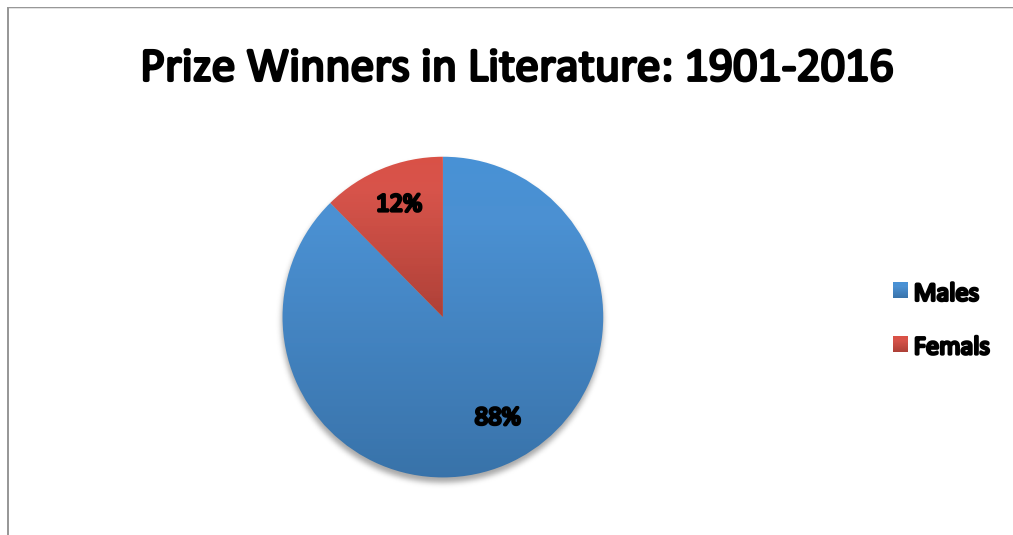
**Nobel Prize in Literature by Genre:  
1901-2016**





# stats: male and female

In 115 years and of 113 Noble Prize in Literature recipients, 14 are women (12.5%).

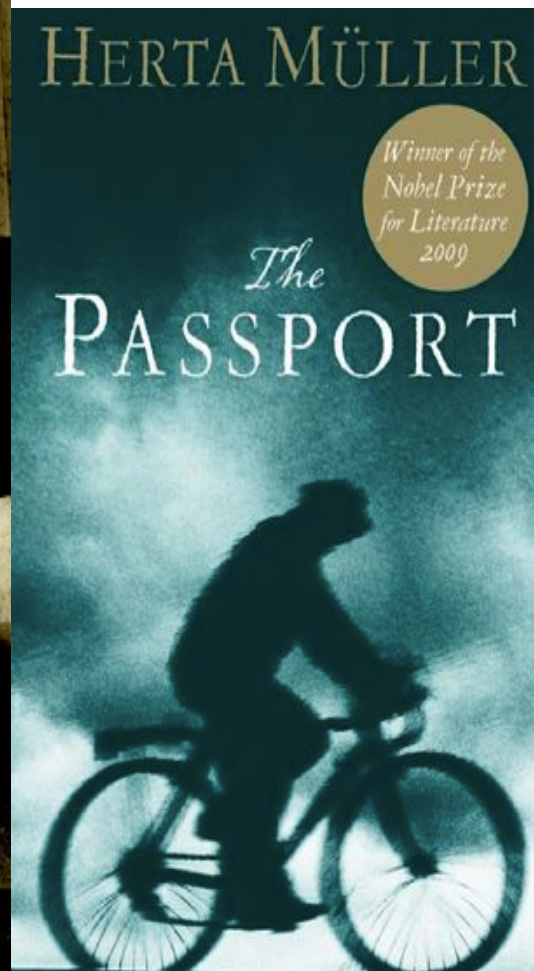
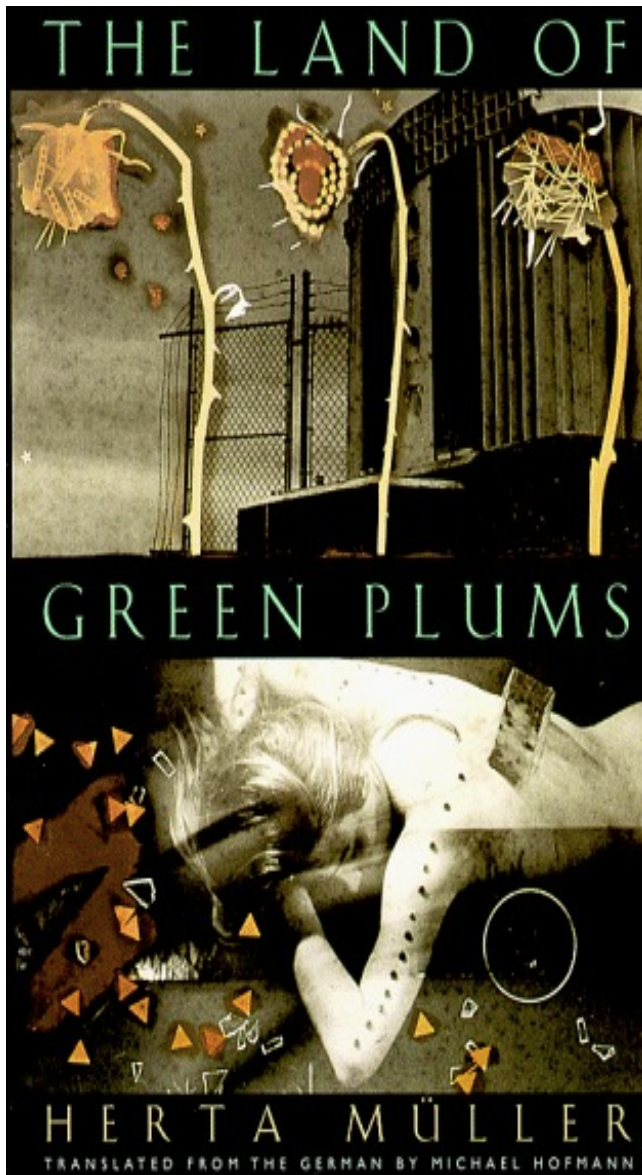


1909	Selma Lagerlöf, Sweden	"in appreciation of the lofty idealism, vivid imagination and spiritual perception that characterize her writings"
1926	Grazia Deledda, Italy	"for her idealistically inspired writings which with plastic clarity picture the life on her native island and with depth and sympathy deal with human problems in general"
1928	Sigrid Undset, Norway	"principally for her powerful descriptions of Northern life during the Middle Ages"
1938	Pearl S. Buck, United States	"for her rich and truly epic descriptions of peasant life in China and for her biographical masterpieces"
1945	Gabriela Mistral, Chile	"for her lyric poetry which, inspired by powerful emotions, has made her name a symbol of the idealistic aspirations of the entire Latin American world"
1966	Nelly Sachs, Sweden	"for her outstanding lyrical and dramatic writing, which interprets Israel's destiny with touching strength"
1991	Nadine Gordimer, South Africa	"who through her magnificent epic writing has - in the words of Alfred Nobel - been of very great benefit to humanity"
1993	Toni Morrison, United States	"who in novels characterized by visionary force and poetic import, gives life to an essential aspect of American reality"
1996	Wisława Szymborska, Poland	"for poetry that with ironic precision allows the historical and biological context to come to light in fragments of human reality"
2004	Elfriede Jelinek, Austria	"for her musical flow of voices and counter-voices in novels and plays that with extraordinary linguistic zeal reveal the absurdity of society's clichés and their subjugating power"
2007	Doris Lessing, Great Britain	"that epicist of the female experience, who with scepticism, fire and visionary power has subjected a divided civilisation to scrutiny"
2009	Herta Müller, Germany/Romania	"who, with the concentration of poetry and the frankness of prose, depicts the landscape of the dispossessed"
2013	Alice Munro, Canada	"master of the contemporary short story"
2015	Svetlana Alexievich, Belarus	"for her polyphonic writings, a monument to suffering and courage in our time"



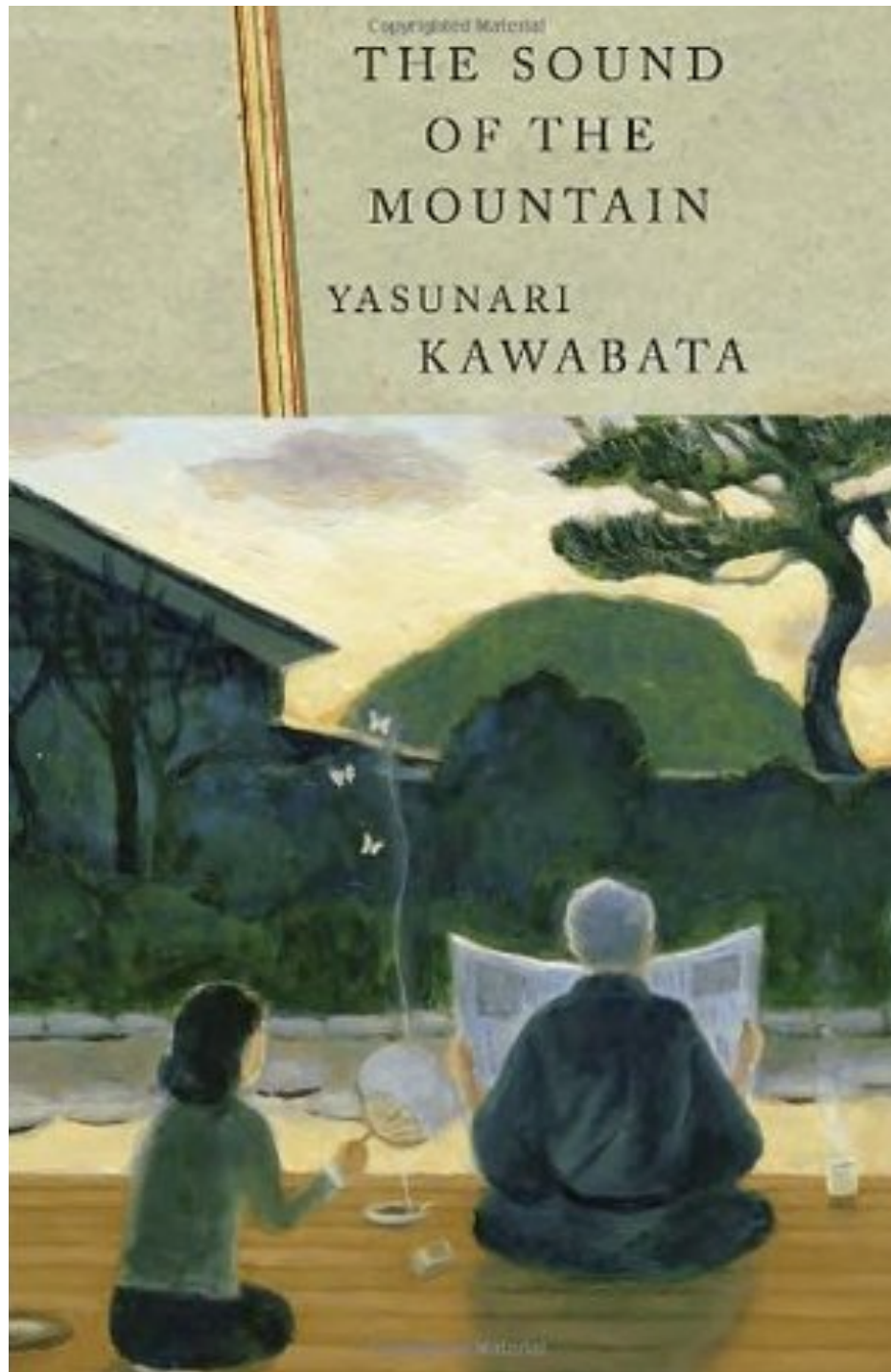


# *herta muller*



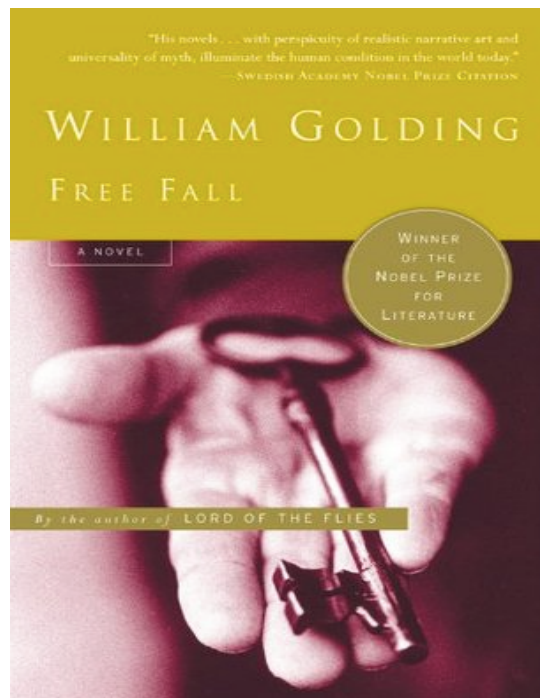
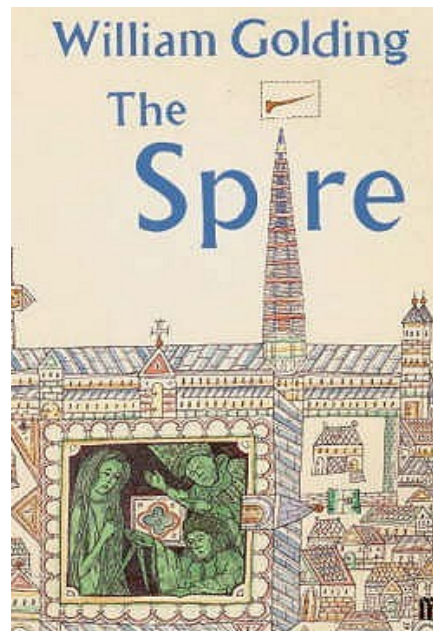
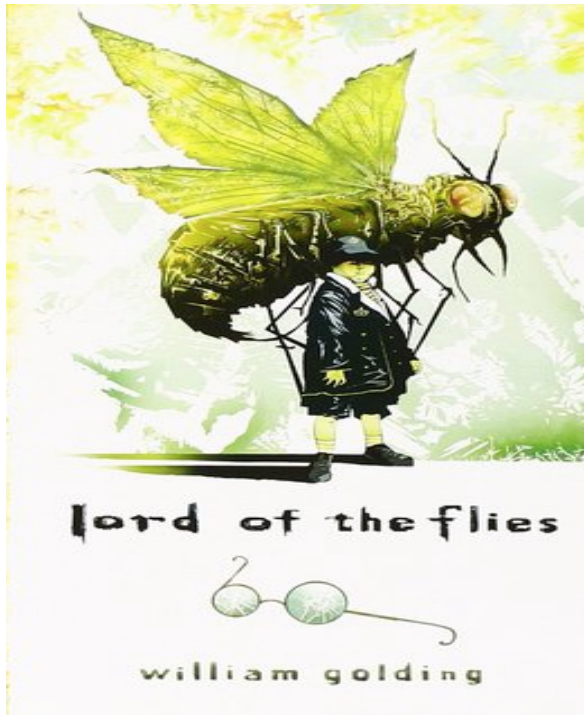


*yasunari kawabata*





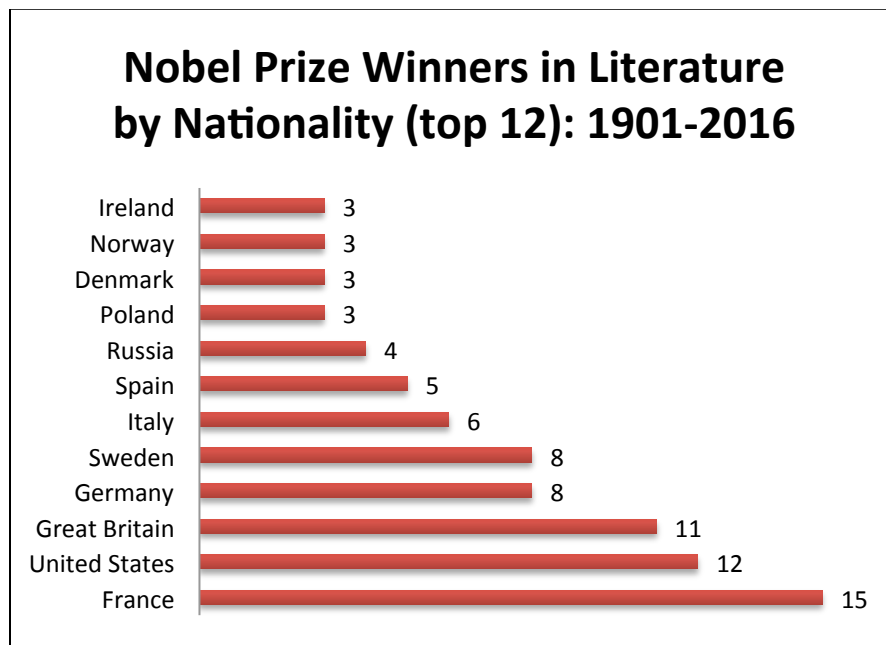
# *william golding*





# stats: nationality & language

The Noble Foundation website is the source of information for the nationalities of the award winners, which is their nationality at the time of the award, although some winners are dual citizens.



The Swedish Academy has been criticised for being Eurocentric. In 1984, the academy – whose members speak 13 languages – declared that attention to non-European authors would increase to make the distribution of awards more global.

The written language of the winners of the Nobel Prize in Literature from 1901 to 2016 include:

English	28	Bengali	1
French	14	Arabic	1
German	13	Czech	1
Spanish	11	Finnish	1
Swedish	7	Hebrew	1
Italian	6	Hungarian	1
Russian	6	Icelandic	1
Polish	4	Occitan	1
Norwegian	3	Portuguese	1
Danish	3	Serbo-Croatian	1
Greek	2	Turkish	1
Japanese	2	Yiddish	1
Chinese	2		

Rabindranath Tagore (winner in 1913) wrote in Bengali and English, Samuel Beckett (winner in 1969) wrote in French and English and Joseph Brodsky (winner in 1987) wrote poetry in Russian and prose in English. They have been categorized under Bengali, French and Russian, respectively.

[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/facts/literature/index.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/facts/literature/index.html)



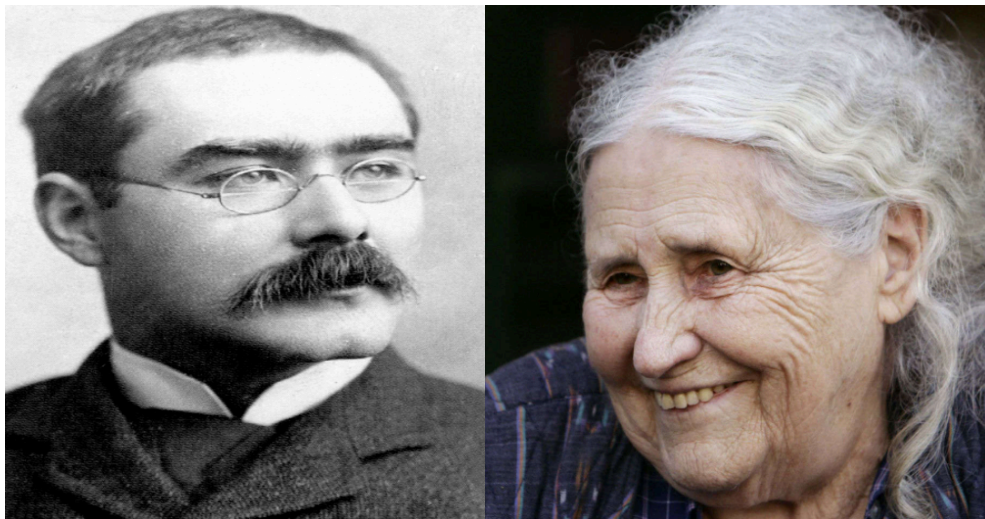


## stats: facts

**Youngest award winner:** Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) who wrote *The Jungle Book* was 41 in 1907. Born in India, he lived in England. His award was "in consideration of the power of observation, originality of imagination, virility of ideas and remarkable talent of narration which characterize the creations of this world-famous author."

**Oldest award winner:** Doris Lessing (1919-2013) who wrote *The Golden Notebook* was 88 in 2007. Born in Iran, she lived in England. Her award showed "that epicist of the female experience, who with scepticism, fire and visionary power has subjected a divided civilisation to scrutiny."

**The average age of Nobel Prize in Literature winners:** 65 years of age.



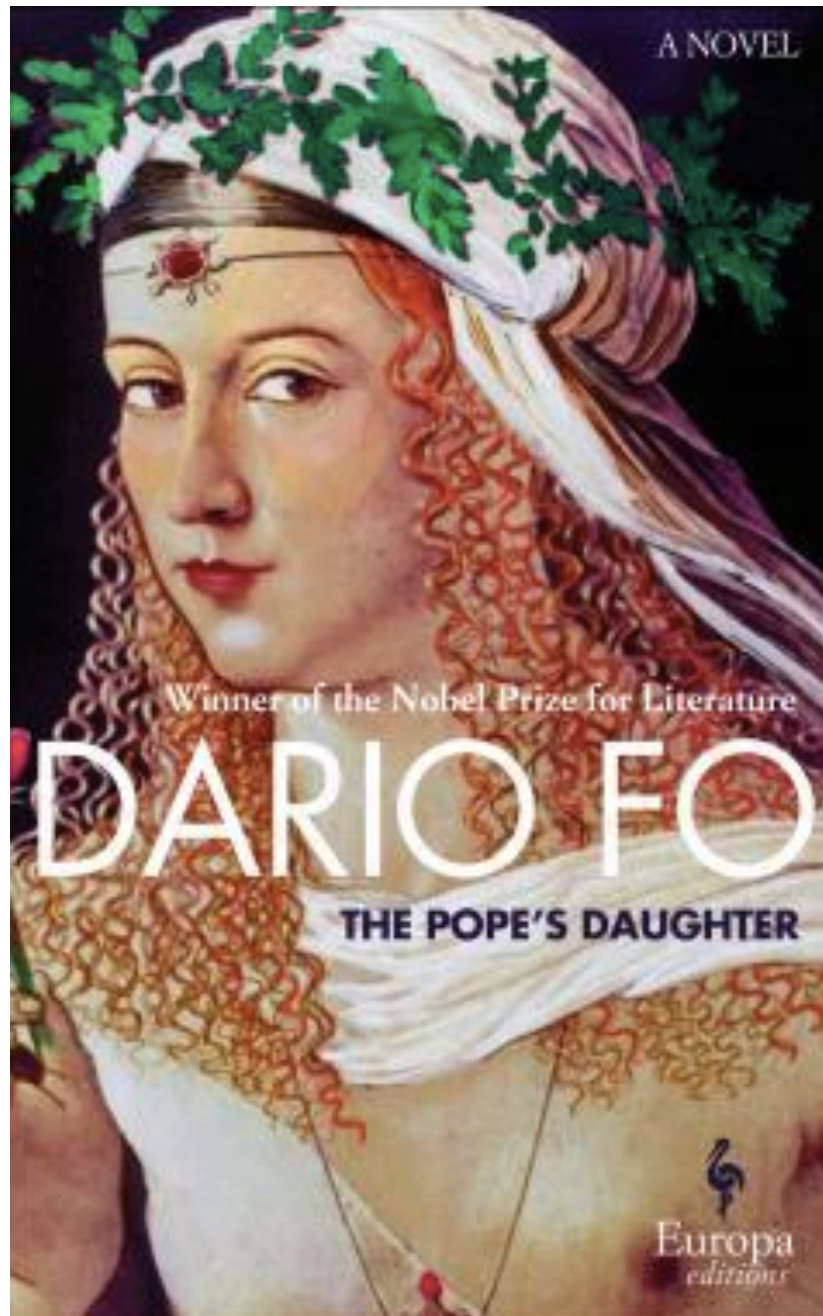
**People who declined the award:** Boris Pasternak (1890-1960), from the Soviet Union, in 1958, and Jean Paul Sartre, from France, in 1964, because he had consistently declined all official honours.

**Posthumous award:** The academy announced Erik Axel Karlfeldt (1864-1931) as the Nobel Prize in Literature winner in 1931. From 1974 the Statutes of the Nobel Foundation stipulated that a Nobel Prize cannot be awarded posthumously. The winner must be living at the time of the award.



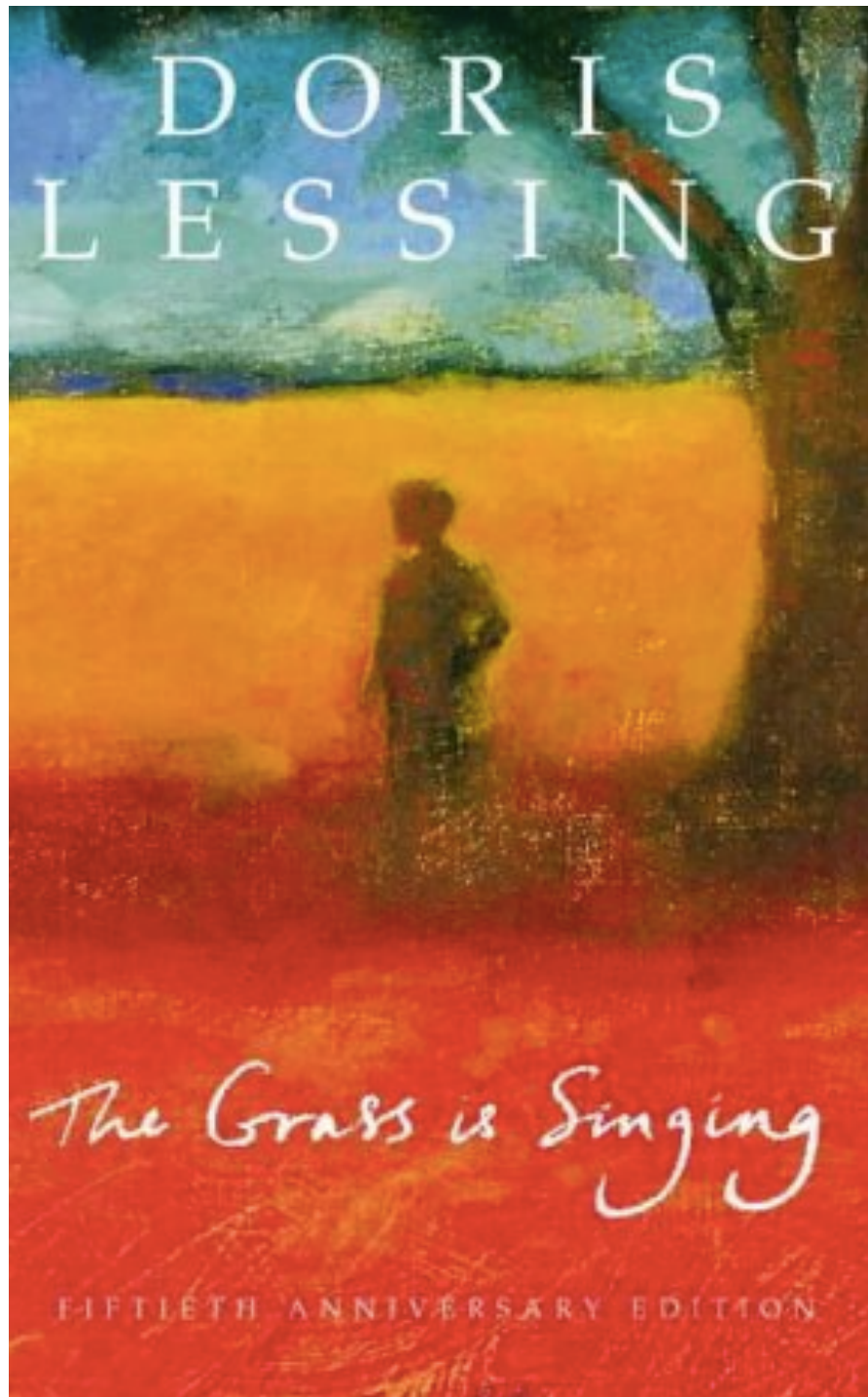


*dario fo*





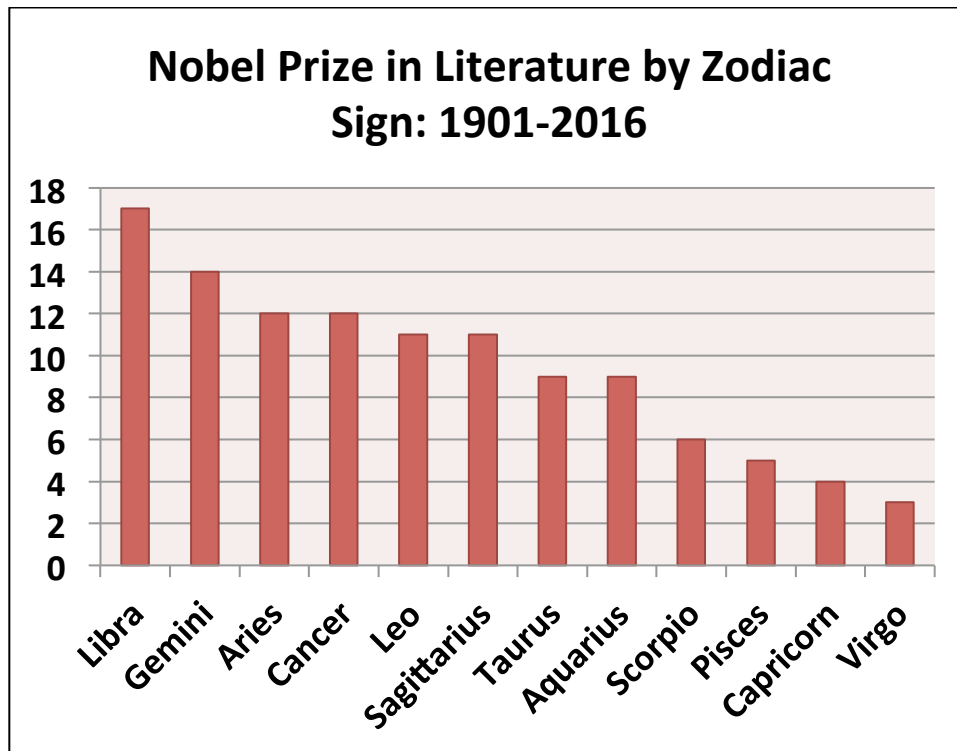
*doris lessing*





# stats: birth dates

Amongst all Nobel Prize winners in all categories, the two most common birth dates are 28 February and 21 May. Amongst winners of the Nobel Prize in Literature the two most common birth dates are 10 October and 16 October in the zodiac sign of Libra.





# literature quotes

Lord Polonius: What do you read, my lord?

Hamlet: Words, words, words.

Lord Polonius: What is the matter, my lord?

Hamlet: Between who?

Lord Polonius: I mean, the matter that you read, my lord.

— William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Reading is that fruitful miracle of a communication in the midst of solitude.

— Marcel Proust

A book is more than a verbal structure or series of verbal structures; it is the dialogue it establishes with its reader and the intonation it imposes upon his voice and the changing and durable images it leaves in his memory. A book is not an isolated being: it is a relationship, an axis of innumerable relationships.

— Jorge Luis Borges

In great literature, I become a thousand different men but still remain myself.

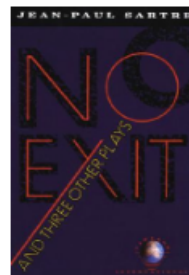
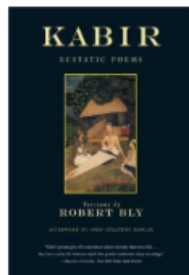
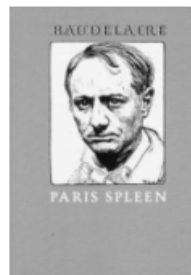
— C.S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism*

Literature is my Utopia. Here I am not disenfranchised. No barrier of the senses shuts me out from the sweet, gracious discourses of my book friends. They talk to me without embarrassment or awkwardness.

— Helen Keller, *The Story of My Life*

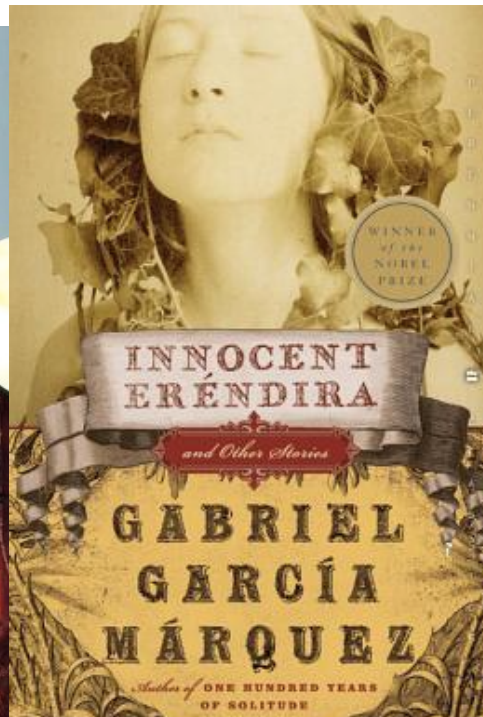
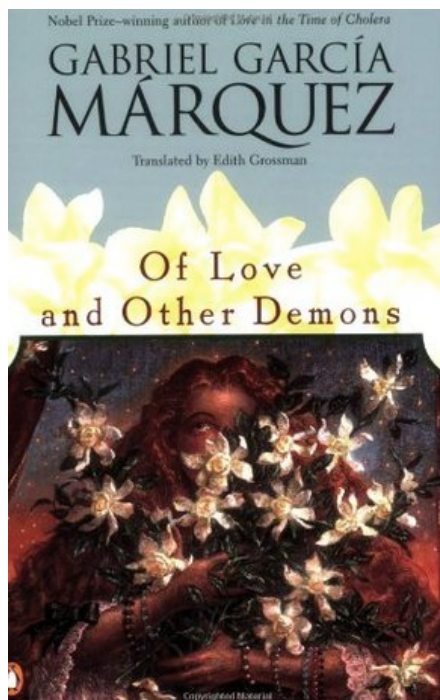
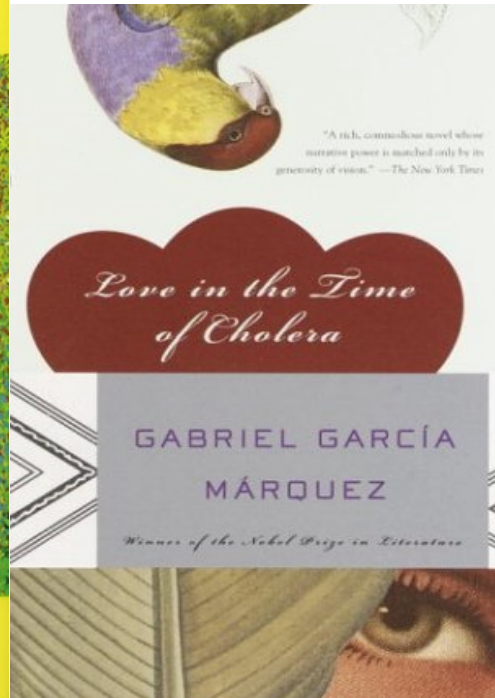
He ate and drank the precious words,  
His spirit grew robust;  
He knew no more that he was poor,  
Nor that his frame was dust.  
He danced along the dingy days,  
And this bequest of wings  
Was but a book. What liberty  
A loosened spirit brings!”

— Emily Dickinson





# *gabriel garcia marquez*



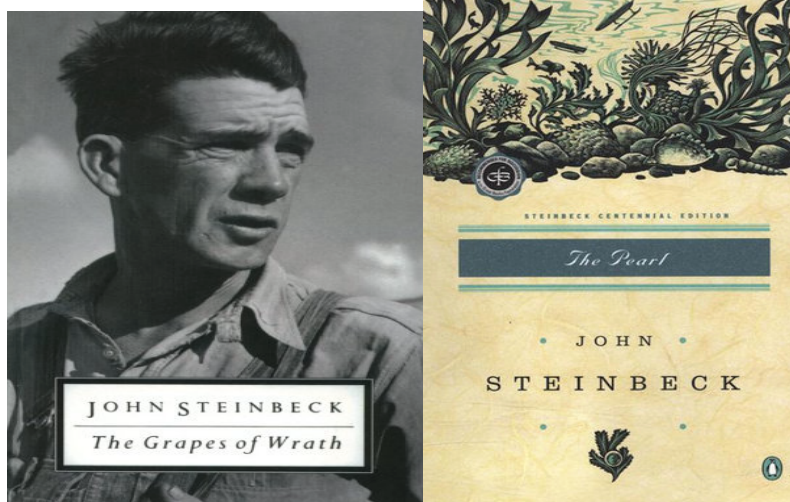


# controversies

Almost each year of the Nobel Prize in Literature award there has been a controversy – well-known and best-selling authors missed out and relative unknown authors at the time have won. Initially the award focussed heavily on European authors, and Swedish authors in particular. In 2008, Horace Engdahl, the permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy, declared that ‘Europe still is the centre of the literary world’ and that ‘the US is too isolated, too insular ... They don’t translate enough and don’t really participate in the big dialogue of literature.’ His comment sparked heated debate.

Authors with a political stance have either been excluded due to potentially ‘offending others’, while other authors have been included and criticised for their inclusion and their politics.

In 1962, John Steinbeck received the Nobel Prize in Literature, which a Swedish newspaper described as ‘one of the academy’s biggest mistakes.’ Even the New York Times critic questioned the award due to Steinbeck’s ‘limited talent.’ When Steinbeck was asked if he deserved the award, he replied ‘Frankly, no.’ When the archived secret files were opened 50 years later in 2012, it was revealed that the contenders in 1962 were: Robert Graves (Great Britain), Lawrence Durrell (Great Britain), Jean Anouilh (France), and Karen Blixen (Denmark). Steinbeck won because ‘there aren’t any obvious candidates for the Nobel prize and the prize committee is in an unenviable situation’ wrote committee member Henry Olsson in 1962.





# 2016 winner: Bob Dylan

The Swedish Academy announced musician and singer-songwriter Bob Dylan as the 2016 Nobel Prize in Literature winner on 13 October 2016 *'for having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition.'* The award ceremony will be held in Sweden on 10 December 2016. The monetary prize was \$900,000. The permanent secretary of the Nobel Academy, Sara Danius, said there was 'great unity' in the academy's decision. Dylan is the first songwriter to win the award and the first American winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature since Toni Morrison in 1993.



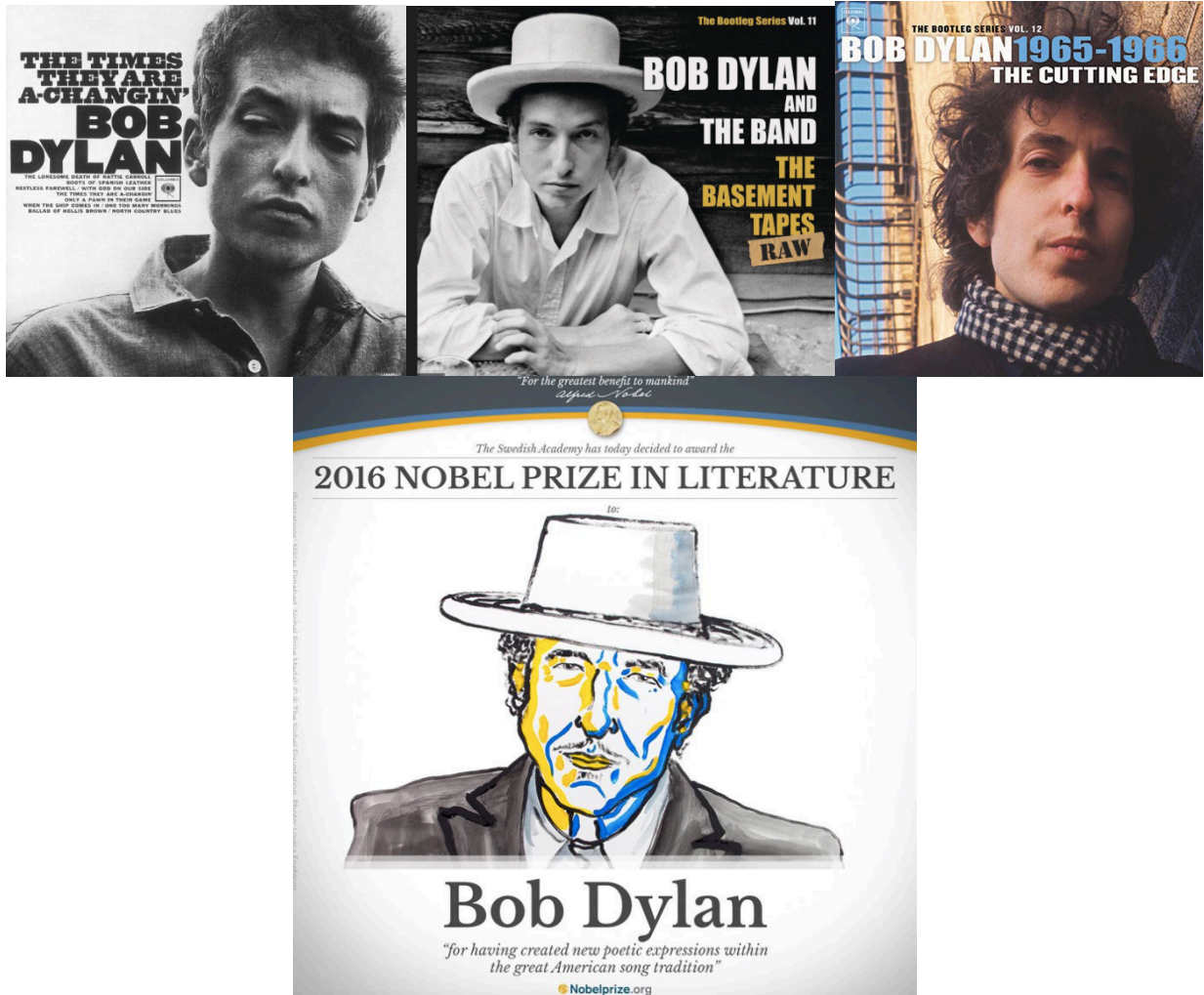
Critics said that the academy had 'dramatically redefined the boundaries of literature' resulting in a debate about whether song lyrics should be regarded as literature. Some said the decision was 'misguided' while others said that Dylan is a 'musical poet' deserving of the award. The 75-year-old Dylan (1941-) has written iconic songs, such as *Blowin' in the Wind* – *The Times They are A-Changin'* – *Like a Rolling Stone* – *It Ain't Me Babe* – *Don't Look Back* – *Mr Tambourine Man* – *It's All Over Now, Baby Blue* – *Knockin' on Heaven's Door* – *Tangled Up in Blue* – *Hurricane* – *Forever Young* – *A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall* – and many more. Dylan has also published works of literature: *Tarantula* (prose poetry); *Chronicles: Volume One* (memoir); and books on his art and lyrics.





Bob Dylan took awhile to respond to the prize, leaving some with the view that he was arrogant and impolite. However, he was still on the road performing – known as his Never Ending Tour, which began on 7 June 1988. During the 28 years of the Never Ending Tour he has performed 2,783 shows ... and it continues.

On 28 October 2016 Dylan contacted the academy to accept the Nobel Prize in Literature. He said the honour had left him speechless and that 'I appreciate the honour so much.' The United Kingdom's Daily Telegraph said that Dylan, in an interview with the paper, described the prize as 'amazing, incredible. It's hard to believe. Whoever dreams about something like that?'





# too late ...

Here is a list of some authors that did not receive the Nobel Prize in Literature from 1901, that may have, could have, or should have, been considered:

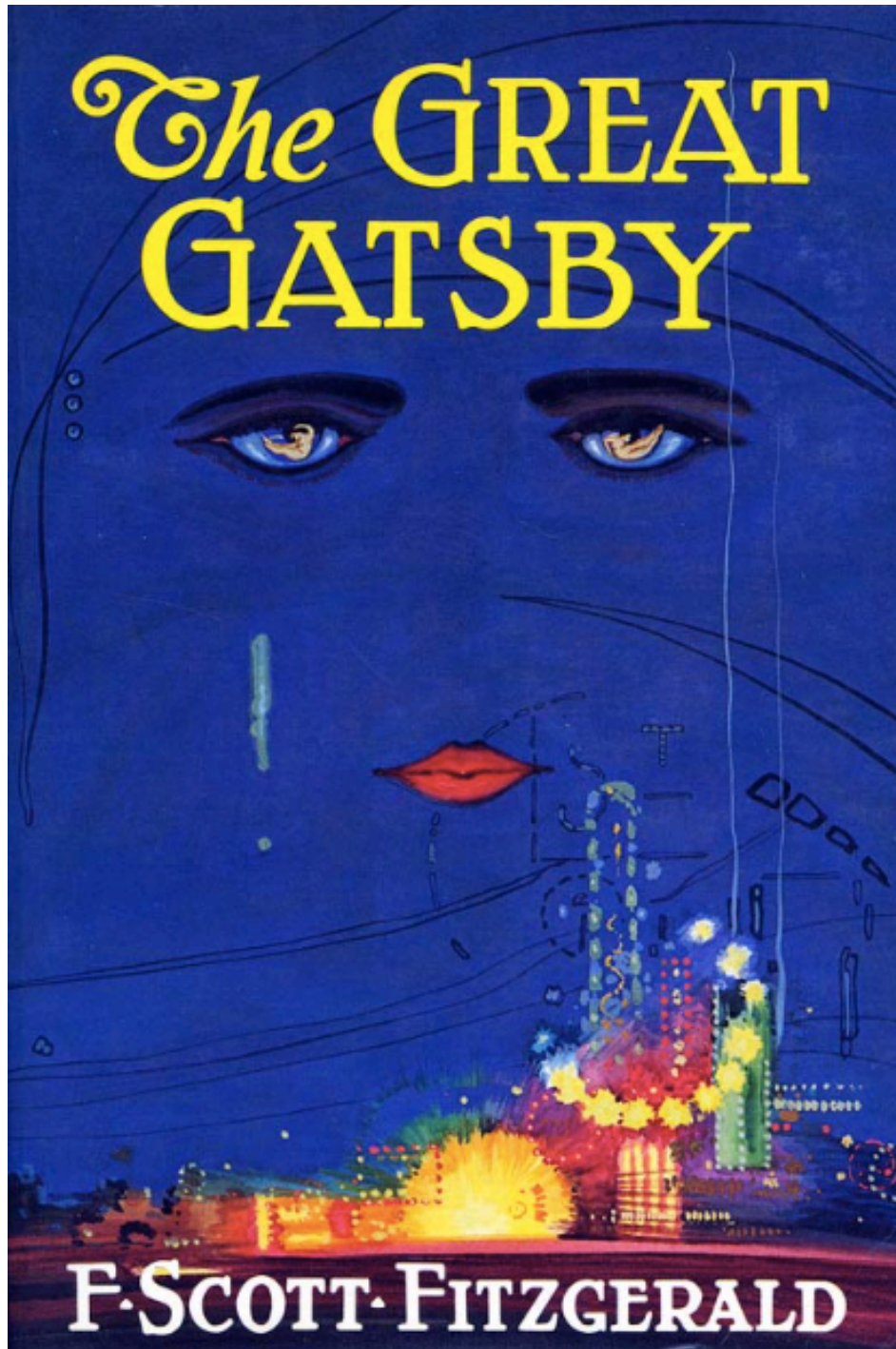
Chinua Achebe (1930-2013), Nigeria  
 Maya Angelou (1928-2014), United States  
 Thea Astley (1925-2004), Australia  
 Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986), France  
 Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986), Argentina  
 Ray Bradbury (1920-2012), United States  
 Karel Capek (1890-1938), Czech Republic  
 Anton Chekhov (1860-1904), Soviet Union  
 Roald Dahl (1916-1990), Great Britain  
 Umberto Eco (1932-2016), Italy  
 Ralph Ellison (1913-1994), United States  
 F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940), United States  
 Anne Frank (1929-1945), Germany  
 Graham Greene (1904-1991), Great Britain  
 Joseph Heller (1923-1999), United States  
 Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), Great Britain

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), Norway  
 James Joyce (1882-1941), Ireland  
 Jack Kerouac (1922-1969), United States  
 Harper Lee (1926-2016), United States  
 Primo Levi (1919-1987), Italy  
 Andre Malraux (1901-1976), France  
 Arthur Miller (1915-2005), United States  
 Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977), Soviet Union  
 George Orwell (1903-1950), Great Britain  
 Ezra Pound (1885-1972), United States  
 Marcel Proust (1871-1922), France  
 Yannis Ritsos (1909-1990), Greece  
 J.D. Salinger (1919-2010), United States  
 Jack Schaefer (1907-1991), United States  
 August Strindberg (1849-1912), Sweden  
 Wilfred Thesiger (1910-2003), Great Britain  
 J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973), Great Britain  
 Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), Soviet Union  
 Mark Twain (1835-1910), United States  
 John Updike (1932-2009), United States  
 Gore Vidal (1925-2012), United States  
 Emile Zola (1840-1902), France





*f. scott fitzgerald*



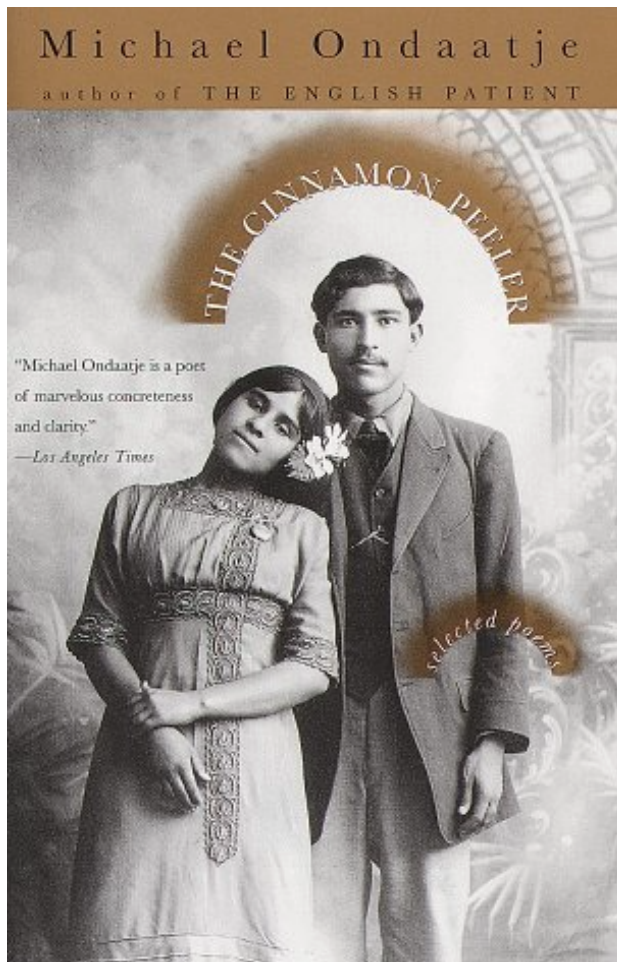


## there's still time ...

For the following authors, to date, there may still be time to win the Nobel Prize for Literature (this is my list):

Alain de Botton (1969-), Switzerland  
Paulo Coelho (1947-), Brazil  
Robert Dessaix (1944-), Australia  
Aminata Sow Fall (1941-), Senegal  
Kazuo Ishiguro (1954-), Japan  
Ismail Kadare (1936-), Albania

Michael Ondaatje (19430-), Sri Lanka  
Arundhati Roy (1961-), India  
Salman Rushdie (1947-), Great Britain-Kashmir  
Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1938-), Kenya  
Alice Walker (1944-), United States





# *naquib mahfouz*





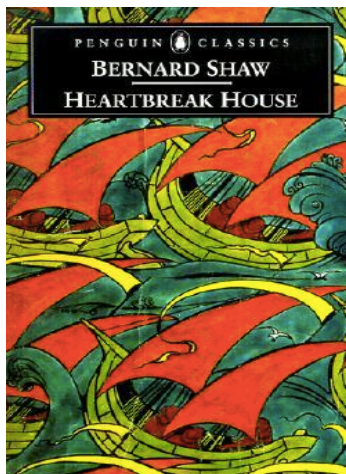
# countries: travel in mind

By reading a book, a person can be transported mentally – travel in the mind – to another place, another time. The rationale for winning the Nobel Prize in Literature often mentions a country, or region, that has been influential in the author's style. Here are some of the comments by the Academy:

1902	Theodor Mommsen, Germany	"the greatest living master of the art of historical writing, with special reference to his monumental work, <i>A History of Rome</i> "
1917	Henrik Pontoppidan, Denmark	"for his authentic descriptions of present-day life in <b>Denmark</b> "
1928	Sigrid Undset, Norway	"principally for her powerful descriptions of <b>Northern life</b> during the <b>Middle Ages</b> "
1938	Pearl S. Buck, United States	"for her rich and truly epic descriptions of peasant life in <b>China</b> and for her biographical masterpieces"
1939	Frans Eemil Sillanpää, Finland	"for his deep understanding of <b>his country's peasantry</b> and the exquisite art with which he has portrayed their way of life and their relationship with Nature"
1963	Giorgos Seferis, Greece	"for his eminent lyrical writing, inspired by a deep feeling for the <b>Hellenic world</b> of culture"
1965	Mikhail Sholokhov, Soviet Union	"for the artistic power and integrity with which, in his epic of the Don, he has given expression to a historic phase in <b>the life of the Russian people</b> "
1966	Shmuel Agnon, Israel	"for his profoundly characteristic narrative art with motifs from <b>the life of the Jewish people</b> "
1967	Miguel Asturias, Guatemala	"for his vivid literary achievement, deep-rooted in the national traits and traditions of Indian peoples of <b>Latin America</b> "
1973	Patrick White, Great Britain	"for an epic and psychological narrative art which has introduced a new continent [ <b>Australia</b> ] into literature"
1974	Eyvind Johnson, Sweden	"for a narrative art, <b>far-seeing in lands and ages</b> , in the service of freedom"
1988	Naguib Mahfouz, Egypt	"who, through works rich in nuance - now clear-sightedly realistic, now evocatively ambiguous - has formed an <b>Arabian narrative art</b> that applies to all mankind"
1990	Octavio Paz, Mexico	"for impassioned writing with <b>wide horizons</b> , characterized by sensuous intelligence and humanistic integrity"
1993	Toni Morrison, United States	"who in novels characterized by visionary force and poetic import, gives life to an essential aspect of <b>American</b> reality"

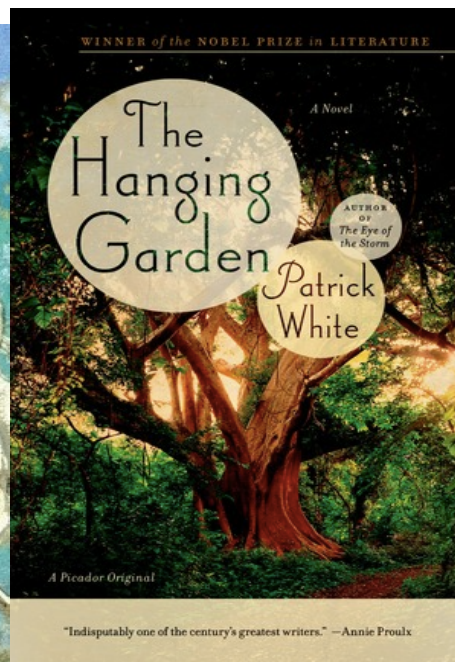
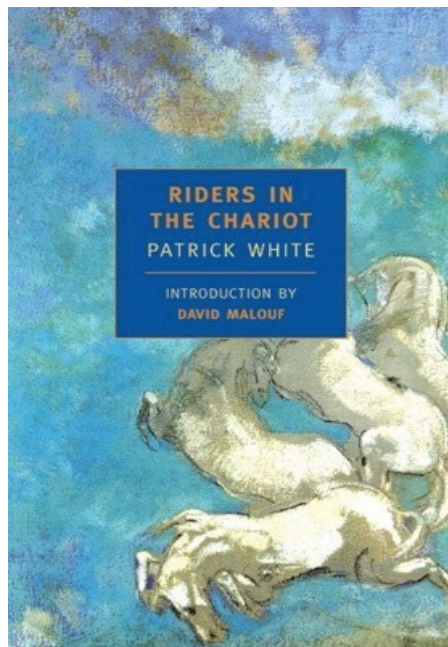
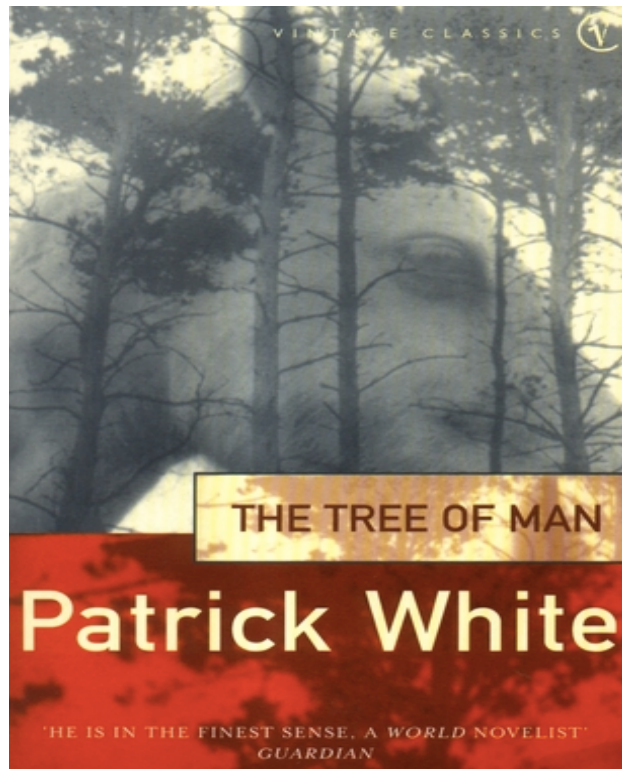
"The Nobel Prize in Literature genres." *Nobelprize.org*. Nobel Media AB 2014.

[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/genres.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/genres.html)





# *patrick white*





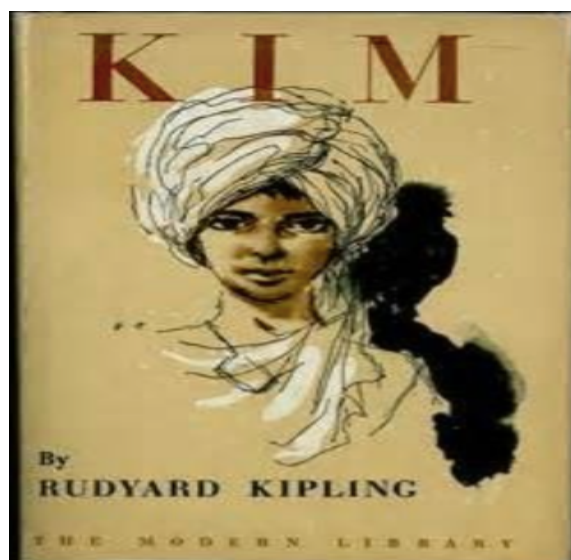
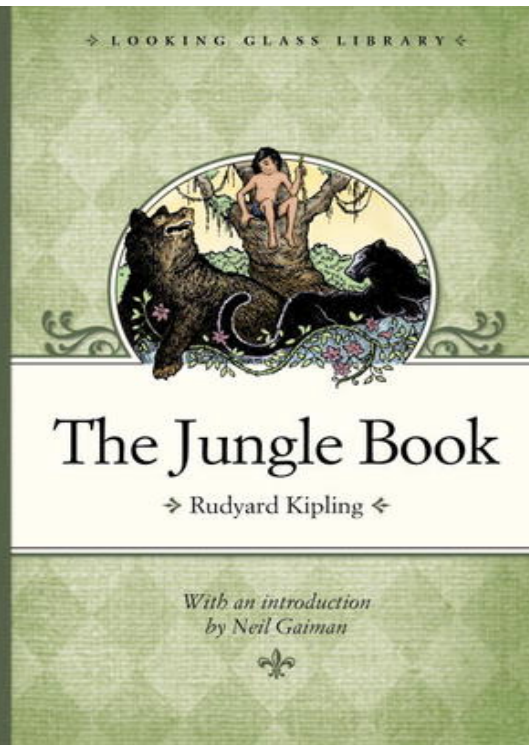
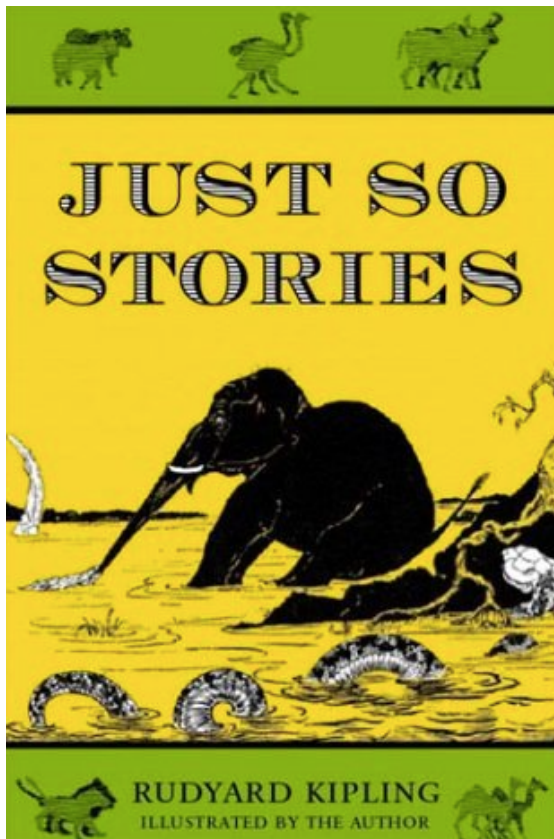
# the medal for literature

The obverse side of the medal for the Nobel Prize in Literature has Alfred Nobel. The reverse side of the medal represents a young man sitting under a laurel tree who, enchanted, listens to and writes down the song of the Muse. The inscription reads: *Inventas vitam iuvat excoluisse per artes* (Inventions enhance life which is beautified through art), which was taken from Vergilius Aeneid, the 6th song, verse 663; *Lo, God-loved poets, men who spake things worthy Phoebus' heart; and they who bettered life on earth by new-found mastery.* The name of the winning Leauteate is engraved on the plate below the figures and the text ACAD. SUEC (Swedish Academy). Erik Lindberg designed the Nobel Prize Medal for Literature, which Svenska Medalj in Eskilstuna manufactures.





# *rudyard kipling*





# what is literature? literature is freedom

What is literature? The Swedish Academy that awards the Nobel Prize for Literature does not define literature, but generally refers to a 'body of work' by an author. The Oxford Dictionary defines literature as 'written works, especially those considered of superior or lasting artistic merit' and 'books and writings published on a particular subject' and even 'leaflets and other printed matter used to advertize products or give advice' (as in promotional or campaign literature). The Cambridge Dictionary defines literature as 'written artistic works, especially those with a high and lasting artistic value.' The Latin form of its derivative – *littera* – means letter or handwriting.

Literature can be fiction (not necessarily true), non-fiction (fact), and faction (a combination of fact and fantasy). Predominantly, literature evokes the traditional forms, such as drama, prose and poetry: the play, the novel and the poem. A novel has characters, a plot, a time period, a setting, and dialogue – it has drama and humour and conflict and tragedy. The novel can be an epic, a short story, or a novella. Within these forms are genres, such as romance, fantasy, science fiction, crime, and so on.

But what is literary fiction and mainstream fiction? Literary fiction often comprises complex issues and artistic writing bound by some form of traditional rules of 'good grammar' and meaning – some people would refer to them as classic literature. Although to others the classics are those novels or drama or poetry anthologies that remain throughout the ages as 'good literature.' Literary fiction is focussed on ideas, themes, messages, and the art of writing. Mainstream fiction has come to mean the books people buy at newsagencies and airports – action, adventure, self-help, business, crime, thriller, espionage, and comedy and so forth – light literature, focussed on the story rather than the art of writing. Oftentimes the boundaries of literary fiction and mainstream fiction are blurred and highly subjective and personalised.

Realistically, any body of written work is literature. The academy therefore is looking for an author who produces a body of work that may be regarded as serious, educated, educating, well written and well presented, with a higher sense of 'worthiness' than mainstream literature. Literature is generally viewed as written works of seminal influence – something groundbreaking, pioneering, reputational, long lasting, and long remembered. An art form. An artistic form with 'artistic merit.'



The Swedish Academy panel reviewing recommended authors take months to read the five short-listed authors' 'body of works.' The panel members conduct, in effect, a literary analysis. But what are the panel members looking for? No-one really knows, for it is a secret, but presumably the panel members are seeking to agree on the merit of the five authors' works – and select only one author for that particular year. Are they necessarily looking for character development, protagonists and antagonists, major and minor characters, diction and dialogue, metaphors and images, themes and topics, symbolism and speech, similes and metaphors, rhythm and rhymes, crisis and conflict, suspense and climax, resolution and romance, and emotion and beauty? Or themes of love and loss, love and hate, demise and death, faith and fidelity, fickleness and faithlessness, and all the other classical emotional responses? Are the panel members seeking signs of the ongoing quest to define humans and humanity? Are they looking for motivations and passions, psychological dramas and critical elements, or exploration and discovery? I think they are merely looking for something that grips their hearts, their emotions, their minds in such a powerful way that is beyond explanation.

Literature – whether 'good' or 'bad' – is merely literature, some say. It is unlike the other Nobel Prizes of chemistry, physics, medicine, and peace that seek answers to life and the universe, to physical healing, and the unity of nations. Instead of determining the definition of 'good' literature, should people be debating what literature is good for? Is literature just as important as the other prizes? Surely yes, for in the mind of Alfred Nobel, literature was an essential element for all humanity and brings an interdisciplinary focus to the scientific debate – the ethics, the social, the psychological, the spiritual, the critical, the rational, the irrational, the ecological, the political, the communicative, and the informative. That's what literature is good for. Literature offers interpretive challenges so that individuals question their own assumptions and truths.

This is what I think the Swedish academy panel members base their ultimate selection on when choosing the Nobel Prize in Literature winner:

"A great book should leave you with many experiences, and slightly exhausted. You should live several lives while reading it." (William Styron, 1925-2006)

"Literature is painting, architecture, and music." (Yevgeny Zamyatin, 1884-1937)

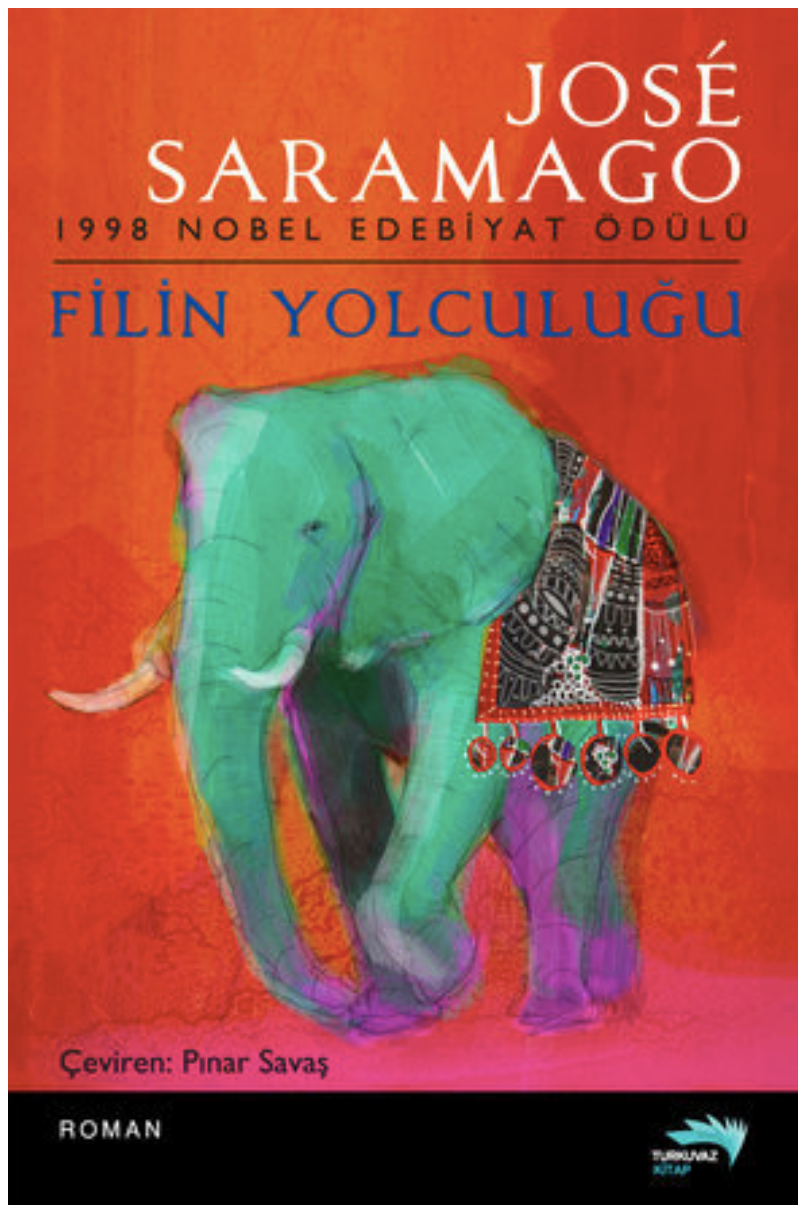
"Literature was the passport to enter a larger life; that is, the zone of freedom. Literature was freedom. Especially in a time in which the values of reading and inwardness are so strenuously challenged, literature is freedom." (Susan Sontag, 1933-2004)





# cover book design

The cover of this edition of Wander to Wonder is the Turkish book cover of Portuguese writer Jose Saramago's book *The Elephant's Journey* (2008). Jose Saramago (1922-2010) won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1998.





# the author: Martina Nicolls

I am an author and humanitarian aid consultant with over 30 years' experience in the management, implementation, and evaluation of international aid development projects, particularly in post-conflict environments and countries with transitional governments, such as Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Darfur, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Pakistan, Iraq, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Georgia, Kosovo, Rwanda, and Sri Lanka, and also Mauritius, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia – and others. I provide technical advice on areas such as peace-building and conflict mitigation, education, poverty reduction, human rights, child labour, data quality and financing models.

But mostly I am a wanderer. Wherever I am and wherever I go I take photographs and I write. My books include:

A Mongolian Lament (2015)  
The Komodo Verses (2012)  
Liberia's Deadeast Ends (2012)

Bardot's Comet (2011)  
Kashmir on a Knife-Edge (2010)  
The Sudan Curse (2009)

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**KEEP  
CALM  
AND DON'T  
JUDGE A BOOK  
BY ITS COVER**