

Stanley Kunitz Medal 2021 Press Release

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Worcester, Mass., poet, editor and teacher Eve Rifkah has been chosen to receive the 2021 Stanley Kunitz Medal awarded through a bequest from two-time Poet Laureate of The United States and Pulitzer Prize winning poet and Worcester native Stanley Kunitz.

The medal, awarded annually since 2015, is the seventh awarded to a person with a strong Worcester County (Mass.) connection who best exemplifies Stanley Kunitz's (born in Worcester in 1905) life-long commitment to poetry and poets. The award recognizes the total commitment to poetry as Kunitz lived it: Teaching poetry, mentoring poets, speaking poetry, publishing poetry, and supporting organizations which nurture poetry.

Poet and publisher of Tupelo Press Jeffrey Levine said of Rifkah's poetry in *Dear Suzanne*, "[She] achieves what may be one of the contemporary artist's most difficult purposes—to deliver moments of affirmation amid a tide of loss. In the doing, her lines come to us both in time and out of time, as with a nod to Virginia Wolf...."

RIFKAH co-founded Poetry Oasis, Inc. (1998-2012), a non-profit poetry association dedicated to education and promoting local poets. She was the founder and editor of *Diner*, a literary magazine and earned her MFA from Vermont College. She also teaches poetry with the WISE program at Assumption University.

Rifkah is the author of *Dear Suzanne* (WordTech Communications, 2010) and *Outcasts: The Penikese Island Leper Hospital 1905-1921* (Little Pear Press 2010). Her next book *Lost in Sight*, will be coming out in 2021 from Silver Bow Publishing. Rifkah has published two chapbooks: *Scar Tissue* (Finishing Line Press, 2017), and *At the Leprosarium*, 2003 winner of the Revelever Chapbook Contest. Her single poems, flash fiction stories and essays have appeared in many journals.

The medal ceremony will be the second of the summer following the 2020 Covid-postponed Susan Roney-O'Brien ceremony on July 22, 2021, at Broad Meadow Book Reservation in Worcester. Eve Rifkah will receive her medal at an event presented by the Worcester County Poetry Association at the Worcester Historical Museum on Thursday, August 19, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.