

The Van Gogh of Contemporary Poetry Mai Văn Phấn Wins First Frederick Turner Prize for Poetry



Dallas, Texas May 8, 2023 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Mai Văn Phấn's passionate verse exemplifies many of the qualities that the newly-founded Frederick Turner Prize, awarded by Mundus Artium Press, is designed to recognize. A unique blend of three mystical traditions, the Buddhist, Christian, and Existentialist, his poetry restores a central focus on the mystery of beauty and its vital role in the generation of the world and the emergence of the true present moment. Like Van Gogh, he sees the forms of nature and the experience of the body as immanent and of profound spiritual importance.

A veteran of Vietnam's tragic struggle for independence, Mai Văn Phấn sets his often rapturous poetry of love and nature against a background that includes not only the fertile lushness of the Delta but the grief and chaos of war. Like Yeats in the Irish struggle for independence, and Pasternak in Russia's

revolution, he chooses the beautiful, unique, and human over the cruel, conformist, and political. Though he has been published worldwide in dozens of languages, only a few of his books, such as *Firmament Without Roof Cover*, *Out of the Dark*, and *Echoes from the Spiral Galaxy*, have appeared in English.

Mai Văn Phan is not only a poet but an important literary critic and shaper of Vietnam's culture. Mundus Artium Press hopes that this award will draw attention to a vital renaissance that is going on in Vietnamese literature today.

<https://mundusartiumpress.us/mai-van-phan-wins-first-frederick-turner-prize-for-poetry/>

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The Frederick Turner Prize committee does not confine itself in its search for excellence to free verse poetry but seeks to recognize the many shaped, sung, and crafted forms of poetry that have arisen independently in human cultures all over the world. Its chief criterion is beauty, and it reflects its namesake's interest in a philosophy of esthetics that includes the evolution of the cosmos. The prize includes a handsome medal, a diploma, and an award of \$1,000.

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