

Rakhshanda Jalil's translation of Gulzar's short story *Dhwaan* wins the inaugural *Jawad Memorial Prize* for Urdu-English translation

The fatal flame



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Late last week, it was announced that Delhi-based writer, critic and literary historian **Rakhshanda Jalil** would be awarded the inaugural Jawad Memorial Prize for Urdu-english translation, instituted in the memory of Urdu poet and scholar Ali Jawad Zaidi by his family, on the occasion of his birth centenary. A recipient of the Padma Shri, the Ghalib Award and the Mir Anis award, Zaidi had to his name several books of ghazals and nazms, scholarly works on Urdu literature, including *The History Of Urdu Literature*, and was working on a book called *Urdu Mein Ramkatha* when he died in 2004.

Considering that much of Zaidi's work "served as a bridge between languages and cultures", his family felt the best way to honour his literary legacy would be to focus on translations. Since the prize was to be given to a short story in translation in the first year, submissions of an unpublished translation of a published Urdu story were sought. While Jalil won the prize, the joint runners-up were Fatima Rizvi, who teaches literature at the University of Lucknow, and Pakistani social scientist and critic Raza Naeem.

The judges, authors Tabish Khair and Musharraf Ali Farooqi, chose to award Jalil for her "careful, and even" translation of a story by Gulzar, *Dhwaan* (Smoke), "which talks about the violence and tragic absurdity of religious prejudice". It recounts the unexpected consequences of a Hindu man's wish to be buried, rather than cremated, as his religion dictated.

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