

A.E. Stallings
Nominated for the Professorship of Poetry

A.E. Stallings is among America's leading poets. Her many accolades include the Richard Wilbur award and the Poets' Prize. She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, has been a Guggenheim Fellow and holds a MacArthur Fellowship (the so-called 'genius award'). The MacArthur Foundation's citation calls her 'a poet ... mining the classical world and traditional poetic techniques to craft works that evoke startling insights about contemporary life'. The esteem in which other poets hold her is shown by the number of them nominating her. Her work has been set to music by at least 8 composers. She is an exceptional translator: her version of Lucretius into rhymed fourteeners is a tour de force; a translation of Hesiod is forthcoming (both Penguin); she has also translated modern Greek verse.

Some of her work treats classical myth (she studied Classics at Georgia and Oxford), some modern Greece (where she lives), some the texture of ordinary life. She has herself described her subject as the traditional things, life, love, death, being mortal within eternity; her handling shows a special blend of wit, grace and poignancy. Christopher Ricks writes that her poems 'are never less than the true voice of feeling, and always more ... she is able to realize the myriad minds of Europe.' (For his full appreciation see the web address below.) Her craftsmanship is superb – among living poets, none better – and at 46 she is at the height of her powers. Her latest poem can be read in *TLS* 22 April and her latest prose piece in *TLS* 14 May. A selection of her verse is available on www.aestallings.wix.com/aestallings. Please take a look.

As a poet she would bring distinction to Oxford. But we are electing not only a poet but a professor. Stallings speaks about poetry with originality and acute perception. She lectures widely; for example, she has given the distinguished Messenger lectures at Cornell. Her poetry workshops are much admired; she leads these in Greece and the USA each year. They would enhance the writing of poetry in Oxford, and we are also confident that she can stimulate those who had not thought they were much interested in poetry. This is a professor who, in lectures and workshops alike, would really make a difference.

She believes firmly in poetry as a spoken art and will appeal to those who share that view. Her experience embraces America and continental Europe: her voice is quiet but cosmopolitan. If elected she would be the first woman in the post, and the first (we think) to originate from outside Britain or Ireland. For her quality as poet, speaker on poetry and a workshop teacher Oxford would be lucky to have her.

There will be a chance to hear her speak and read early in June. Please watch for details.

P. T. O.

Jas' Elsner, CCC
Constanze Güthenke, CCC
Stephen Harrison, CCC
Richard Jenkyns, LMH
Frances Lannon, LMH
Peter Mackridge, St Cross
Erica McAlpine, Keble
Peter McDonald, Christ Church
Patrick McGuinness, St Anne's
Dirk Obbink, Christ Church
Chris Pelling, Christ Church
Nicholas Shrimpton, LMH
David Womersley, St Catherine's