New Haven, Conn.—Charles Wright, hailed as one of the leading American poets of his
generation, has been named the winner of Yale’s 2013 Bollingen Prize for American Poetry.

The Bollingen Prize in American Poetry is among the most prestigious prizes given to American
writers. Established by Paul Mellon in 1949, it is awarded biennially by the Yale University
Library to an American poet for the best book published during the previous two years or for
lifetime achievement in poetry. The prize includes a cash award of $150,000.

“A poet of remarkable scope and ambition, Wright’s lyrics are like verbal scroll paintings,
considering a vast landscape but exploring every aspect in exquisite detail, a stylistic
combination that properly figures both the significance and insignificance of the human,” noted
the three-member judging committee. “In poems that render the poignancy of moving time, the
constancy of the landscape, and the mystery of the invisible, Wright binds the secular and the
sacred in language charged with urgency and grace.”

The judges awarded Wright the Bollingen Prize for his 2012 book, “Bye-and-Bye: Selected Late
Poems,” describing it as “an extended meditation in which we sense ‘splinters of the divine’ in
the phenomena and cyclic changes of the natural world, and in the elusive reaches of memory,
myth, and history.

“At the same time,” they noted, “this volume succeeds in capturing the Morandi-like quality that
Wright describes as ‘the metaphysics of the quotidian’.”

While stationed in Italy during four years of service in the U.S. Army, Wright discovered the
work of Ezra Pound and began to write poetry for the first time. His first collection of poems,

On learning he had been awarded the Bollingen Prize, Wright responded that he was delighted:
“I always fantasized about winning the Bollingen Prize because it’s the only prize Pound ever
won.”

Wright’s recent books include: “Outtakes” (2010); “Sestets: Poems” (2009); “Littlefoot: A
Poem” (2008); “Scar Tissue” (2007); “The Wrong End of the Rainbow” (2005); and “Buffalo
Yoga” (2004). His two volumes of criticism are: “Halflife” (1988), and “Quarter Notes” (1995).
He has translated the work of Dino Campana and Eugenio Montale.

Wright, the Souder Family Professor of English, emeritus, at the University of Virginia, has
received numerous awards during his career, including the National Book Award, the PEN
Translation Prize, the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, the Lenore Marshall Prize from the Academy of
American Poets, the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Critics Circle Award, the Griffin Prize, the
American Book Award in Poetry, and the Los Angeles Times Book Award.
The Bollingen Prize has honored the literary accomplishments of poets whose work continues to be a force in shaping contemporary American letters. Early Bollingen Prize winners — Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, Marianne Moore, and E.E. Cummings — are widely considered writers whose work defined a new American literature of the 20th century. More recent winners — John Ashbery, Robert Creeley, Louise Glück, John Hollander, Gary Snyder, Jay Wright, and Adrienne Rich — represent “exciting stylistic diversity in American writing,” note the prize organizers.

This year’s judges were poet Susan Howe; poet, critic, and editor Geoffrey O’Brien; and literary scholar and cultural critic Joan Richardson.

Howe is the author of numerous books of poetry including “The Midnight,” “Souls of the Labadie Tract,” “The Europe of Trusts, Pierce-Arrow,” and “Singularities.” Her most recent book, “That This,” was awarded the Bollingen Prize in 2011. Among O’Brien’s many book titles are “The Fall of the House of Walworth,” “Sonata for Jukebox,” and “Dream Time: Chapters from the Sixties.” He has published six collections of poetry of which the most recent is “Early Autumn.” A book of his writings on film 2002–2012 will be published later this year. Richardson is professor of English, comparative literature, and American studies at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Author of a two-volume biography of the poet Wallace Stevens, she co-edited, with Frank Kermode, “Wallace Stevens: Collected Poetry and Prose.” Her study “A Natural History of Pragmatism: The Fact of Feeling from Jonathan Edwards to Gertrude Stein” was published in 2007; her book “Pragmatism and American Experience” will be published later this year.

For more information about Charles Wright visit the following Web pages:
http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/charles-wright
http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/31
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Wright_(poet)


I think I’ll lie down just here for a while,
the sun on my cheek,
The wind like grass stems across my face,
And listen to what the world says,
the luminous, transubstantiated world,
That holds me like nothing in its look.