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## 2016 AWARD WINNERS

### Gayatri Gamarsh Memorial Awards For Literary Excellence

#### Sujay Datta (Bengali)



As a professor, **Sujay Datta (Akron, Ohio)** leads a very busy life teaching students, guiding researchers and writing papers in the field of statistics. But he was always an avid reader of Bengali and (to a lesser extent) English literature. He started writing seriously in his college days in Kolkata but after coming to the US as a graduate student, he had to shelve his writing passion for several years. Fortunately, about a decade ago he was urged by his friends in Milwaukee to write something for the local Bengali cultural association's annual magazine. That released his bottled up literary passions, and he returned to his literary activities with renewed zeal. He has published short stories and essays in *DuKool*, *Prabas Bandhu* and *Batayan* and has translated Hindi stories into Bengali. The award recognizes him for his creative and skillful story-telling.

#### Sonnet Mondal (English)



Born and brought up in West Bengal, India, **Sonnet Mondal** is a young Indian English poet and editor. Author of eight books of poetry, founder of *The Enchanting Verses Literary Review*, and a member of the editorial board of the Paris-based bilingual magazine *Levure Litteraire*, Sonnet was recognized by Forbes Magazine in 2014 and 2015 among “the celebrated authors of India”. In 2010 *India Today* listed him as one of “famous five Bengali youths”. His poems have been translated into nine languages, and he has been invited to read his works at numerous poetry conferences around the world. Just this month he led a four-member delegation of Indian poets at *Ars Poetica Festival* in Slovakia. The award recognizes Sonnet Mondal for brilliant and multilayered interplay of ideas and imagery in his poetry.

### **Lagnajita Mukhopadhyay (English)**



At the tender age of 18, **Lagnajita Mukhopadhyay (Nashville, Tennessee)** has already become an accomplished poet. In 2015, she was named as Nashville's first Youth Poet Laureate, and earlier this year she was selected as Southeast Regional Youth Poet Laureate. As one of the five finalists this year for the National Youth Poet Laureate program of the Poetry Society of America, she was invited to the White House to meet Michelle Obama. Author of a book, *this is our war*, Lagnajita has published her poems in several local and national magazines and has read her work at many literary events. Born in Kolkata, Lagnajita came to the US at the age of 6 with her parents. The award recognizes Lagnajita for giving voice to the agonies and aspirations of today's youth.