

## The 2016 Pulitzer Prize Winner (/prize-winners-by-year/2016) in Fiction (/prize-winners-by-category/219)

*For distinguished fiction published in book form during the year by an American author, preferably dealing with American life, Ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).*

### *The Sympathizer*, by Viet Thanh Nguyen (Grove Press)

A layered immigrant tale told in the wry, confessional voice of a "man of two minds" -- and two countries, Vietnam and the United States.

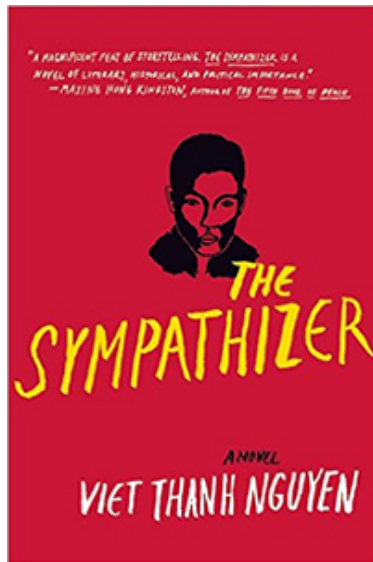


Columbia University President Lee C. Bollinger (left) presents the 2016 Fiction Prize to Viet Thanh Nguyen.

## WINNING WORK

# The Sympathizer

By Viet Thanh Nguyen



A profound, startling, and beautifully crafted debut novel, *The Sympathizer* is the story of a man of two minds, someone whose political beliefs clash with his individual loyalties. In dialogue with but diametrically opposed to the narratives of the Vietnam War that have preceded it, this novel offers an important and unfamiliar new perspective on the war: that of a conflicted communist sympathizer.

It is April 1975, and Saigon is in chaos. At his villa, a general of the South Vietnamese army is drinking whiskey and, with the help of his trusted captain, drawing up a list of those who will be given passage aboard the last flights out of the country. The general and his compatriots start a new life in Los Angeles, unaware that one among their number, the captain, is secretly observing and reporting on the group to a higher-up in the Viet Cong. *The Sympathizer* is the story of this captain: a man brought up by an absent French father and a poor Vietnamese mother, a man who went to university in America, but returned to Vietnam to fight for the Communist cause. Viet Thanh Nguyen's astonishing novel takes us inside the mind of this double agent, a man whose lofty ideals necessitate his betrayal of the people closest to him. A gripping spy novel, an astute exploration of extreme politics, and a moving love story, *The Sympathizer* explores a life between two worlds and examines the legacy of the Vietnam War in literature, film, and the wars we fight today.

-- from the publisher

## BIOGRAPHY



Photo: Viet Thanh Nguyen

**Viet Thanh Nguyen** was born in Vietnam and raised in America. His stories have appeared in *Best New American Voices*, *TriQuarterly*, *Narrative*, and the *Chicago Tribune* and he is the author of the academic book *Race and Resistance*. He teaches English and American Studies at the University of Southern California and lives in Los Angeles.

## FINALISTS

*Nominated as finalists in Fiction in 2016:*

***Get in Trouble: Stories*, by Kelly Link (Random House) (/finalists/kelly-link)**

***Maud's Line*, by Margaret Verble (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) (/finalists/margaret-verble)**

---

## THE JURY

**Art Winslow** (Chair)

Critic and author, Kalamazoo, MI

**Edward P. Jones** (/winners/edward-p-jones)\* (Past Pulitzer Prize winner)

Author and Professor of English, George Washington University

**Leah Price**

Francis Lee Higginson Professor of English, Harvard University

\* Past Pulitzer  
Prize winner

---

## WINNERS IN FICTION

2017

***The Underground Railroad*, by Colson Whitehead (Doubleday) (/winners/colson-whitehead)**

2015

***All the Light We Cannot See*, by Anthony Doerr (Scribner) (/winners/anthony-doerr)**

2014

***The Goldfinch*, by Donna Tartt (Little, Brown) (/winners/donna-tartt)**

2013

***The Orphan Master's Son*, by Adam Johnson (Random House) (/winners/adam-johnson)**

SEE ALL FICTION (/PRIZE-WIN...)

---

## 2016 PRIZE WINNERS

### EXPLANATORY REPORTING

**T. Christian Miller of ProPublica and Ken Armstrong of The Marshall Project** (</winners/t-christian-miller-propublica-and-ken-armstrong-marshall-project>)

### BREAKING NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY

**Mauricio Lima, Sergey Ponomarev, Tyler Hicks and Daniel Etter of *The New York Times*** (</winners/mauricio-lima-sergey-ponomarev-tyler-hicks-and-daniel-etter>)

### LOCAL REPORTING

**Michael LaForgia, Cara Fitzpatrick and Lisa Gartner of *Tampa Bay Times*** (</winners/michael-laforgia-cara-fitzpatrick-and-lisa-gartner>)

### PUBLIC SERVICE

**Associated Press** (</winners/associated-press>)

[SEE ALL 2016 WINNERS \(/PRIZE...](#)

*Honoring excellence in journalism and the arts since 1917*

---

© 2018 The Pulitzer Prizes — Columbia University, 709 Pulitzer Hall, 2950 Broadway, New York, NY 10027



