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July 18, 2003

DURHAM, N.H. - Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Charles Simic has been awarded the Horst Bienek Prize for Poetry by the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. Simic has been a professor of English at the University of New Hampshire for 30 years.

Simic will receive the major international poetry prize in December, shortly before the anniversary of Bienek's death. Bienek was a prize-winning German novelist, poet and filmmaker. His best-known work is a tetralogy of novels dealing with his reminiscences of Gleiwitz, his place of origin and formerly a city on Germany's eastern border. Gleiwitz was the site of a fake attack by SS troops in Polish uniforms in the fall of 1939, an event that triggered the outbreak of World War II.

Since his first collection 36 years ago, Simic has published more than 60 books, including "Charon's Cosmology," which was nominated for a National Book Award, and "The World Doesn't End: Prose Poems," which won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry. In addition, he has contributed hundreds of poems and essays to the most widely read literary journals in the country.

"This is a great honor," Simic said. "The company of winners is terrific, and it is always amazing to learn you exist on such a large scale."

Simic says this is the first major international prize he has received.

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