



2025 French-American Foundation Translation Prize

**Finalist Interview with Cory Stockwell,
translator of *The City in the Distance* by Jean-Luc Nancy (Fordham University Press)**

Q: What did you enjoy most about translating *The City in the Distance* by Jean-Luc Nancy?

Cory: I think what I enjoyed most about translating this book is that it contains essays from across Nancy's career: the first was written in the 1980s, while two others were written as recently as 2010. So in translating the book, I was able to closely follow certain permutations in Nancy's thought and style. You never engage with a text as closely as when you translate it, so I felt like I was in a conversation with different versions of Nancy over a span of several decades.

Q: You've translated a number of works by Jean-Luc Nancy. What draws you to his work, and how has translating his writing shaped your approach to translation?

Cory: I was drawn to his work long before I started translating him, because he has probably done more than any other recent thinker to probe a concept that interests me a great deal, that of community. In terms of how translating him has shaped my approach to translation, well, I should say that his book *The Fragile Skin of the World* was my first book-length translation, and what it showed me above all is how hard translating is! I mean this as a compliment: the book is so rich and draws upon so many of the strands that make up Nancy's thought that I had to do quite a bit of research – to understand how certain concepts had developed over the course of his career, how these concepts had been rendered by other translators, etc. This was daunting, of course, but it also gave me a real appreciation for the craft of translation – and made me smarter in the process!

Q: The French-American Foundation Translation Prize seeks to honor translators and their craft, and recognize the important work they do bringing works of French literature to Anglophone audiences. What does being named a finalist for this prize mean to you, and, in your own words, why does a Prize like this matter?

Cory: It means the absolute world to me to be named a finalist, because it means that something I had a part in creating had a real effect on someone, and indeed (to nod to one of Nancy's favorite themes) truly touched someone. I couldn't be more grateful and honored, especially when I look at the list of past recipients and see so many



names – people like Frank Wynne, Charlotte Mandell, and Richard Howard – whom I deeply admire. As for why the Prize matters, I think of it as a reward not only for translators but for the publishers who have the courage to take risks on literary translations, based mainly on a conviction that it will enrich the lives of people in the United States and, more broadly, the English-speaking world. They deserve to be recognized, and this Prize does just that.