



Paul Celan
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“Poetry can be a message in a bottle sent in the conviction – certainly not always firm – that it will eventually reach the shore.” This is what Paul Celan hoped for in 1960, when receiving the prestigious Büchner Prize. As a result of the award, more European publishers became interested in his poetry. In Italy, Mondadori started a complex negotiation involving various Italian poets such as Sereni, Zanzotto, Fortini, Spaziani and Balestrini in a major translation project. The negotiation lasted until Celan’s death without result – or almost. In fact, in 1964 he sent a list of poems to be included in an anthology, which remained among the papers kept in the Mondadori Foundation. Dario Borso found it, translated the poems and reconstructed their history. Although the message arrived late it is as new, on the centenary of the sender’s birth.

“Knowing myself well enough, I know that my love for Celan, as it was born, will fade away leaving little not so much the memory but a sign. Do you know that the term character comes from the Greek *karàzo*, I engrave? Character is notoriously the most difficult thing to change, and Celan has definitely changed mine” – Dario Borso.

You can find the full interview [here](#).

Dario Borso teaches History of Philosophy at the University of Milan. He edited and translated works by Paul Celan, Arno Schmidt and Søren Kierkegaard, together with books on the Italian partisans during the Second World War.

