Good morning. On behalf of Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, I am so happy to be here to accept the 2015 Mildred L. Batchelder Award for *Mikis and the Donkey*. 2014 was an exceptional year for international children’s books, and I offer my warmest congratulations to the Batchelder Honor winners, First Second Books and Enchanted Lion Books.

As you may know, the Batchelder Award is one of the few ALA awards that is given to the publisher, rather than to the author, illustrator, or translator. But we are keenly aware of our great debt to author Bibi Dumon Tak, illustrator Philip Hopman, translator Laura Watkinson, and Dutch publisher Querido Children’s Books. This is the second Batchelder Award for this entire team, who also produced the 2012 winning book, *Soldier Bear*.

You may not be familiar with our company because as publishing companies go, we are definitely on the small side, with just three-and-a-half dedicated employees responsible for acquisitions, editorial, and production of some 16-18 titles per year. We are located in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and are family owned and proudly independent. And we LOVE international children’s books! Books in translation make up about half of the new titles on our list each season.

We have noticed a greater and greater openness to these books in the American marketplace in recent years. The major review journals of children’s literature are filled with books that originated in other languages. Organizations like USBBY work tirelessly to promote international books, and I am so pleased to see their programs at ALA being presented to capacity crowds. Numerous librarians across the U.S. do their part to share international books with their patrons through programming and displays and word-of-mouth recommendation. And, of course, the Batchelder Award has long been a sought-after stamp of approval for these books.

A recent article in *Publishing Perspectives* explores “Why Reading Translated Kids’ Books Makes a Difference.” The author quotes British writer, editor, and translator Daniel Hahn: “We have some bad habits in the English-speaking world,” Hahn says. “We may be better than anyone at cultural export, but where import is concerned we are a disgrace... Writing translated from other languages makes you see things differently. It isn’t less important for children, but more. How could it not be vital for readers?”

Batchelder
AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

This past year the subject of diversity in children’s books has been much on our minds and at the forefront of many of our discussions. I hope that we are on the edge of a wonderful frontier in children’s books where our stories are full of diversity of every kind. And I also hope that this diversity will encompass characters from places far away from where we ourselves call home.

Great thanks to Diane Janoff and the 2015 Batchelder Committee for honoring us with the selection of *Mikis and the Donkey*; to ALSC and all the wonderful people in the ALSC office in Chicago who keep us so well informed and who put up with our endless email queries; to our translator extraordinaire, Laura Watkinson, whose ever-growing list of translations that have won Batchelder Awards and Honors will soon require an entire page in her CV; and finally, to my dear colleague and friend Gayle Brown, our associate publisher and art director, whose great enthusiasm for books in translation is the reason for their dominant presence in our publishing program. Thank you all.

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2015 MILDRED L. BATCHELDER AWARD COMMITTEE
Diane Janoff, Chair, Queens (N.Y.) Library
Sarah Hagge, Chicago, Ill.
Celia Holm, Austin (Texas) Public Library
Elsworth Rockefeller, Oak Park (Ill.) Public Library
Sara-Jo Sites, George F Johnson Memorial Library, Endicott, N.Y.

For more information about the Batchelder Award, visit http://bit.ly/batchelder-award.
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