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This issue features **Lucy Nguyen-Hong-Nhiem**

The Viet Nam Literature Project helps the world read, research and teach in English the literature of Viet Nam. Our overall purpose is to improve the opportunities for Americans to gain a serious understanding of our world by listening to people from somewhere else. The difficulties we address are the patchy demand in English for this literature which impedes trade publishing, academic research, and teacher training, and the lasting divisions among Americans as well as Vietnamese caused by the struggle for a free and independent Viet Nam.

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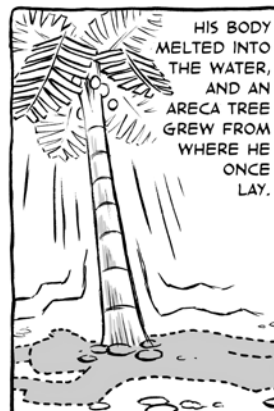
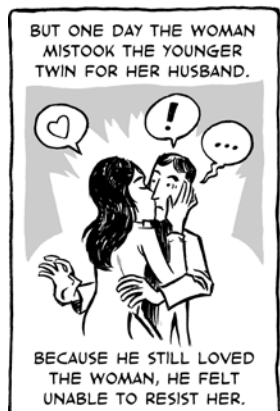
Web Team

Paulette Stiles • Philip Arthur Moore

Viet Nam Literature Project Programs

Website – teachable extracts by Vietnamese authors, in English translation when necessary, with supporting materials for classroom and research use.

Wikivietlit – online reference to Vietnamese literature, written by experts, edited by poet Linh Dinh



the comic continues inside...

D E A R F R I E N D S

Dear Friends,

Snow is called for tomorrow here in Orange County, North Carolina, but by the time we get this printed and mailed to you our long, cold winter should be over. This weekend I plan to be in Fort Mill, South Carolina for the Crossfit sectionals, competing in 60-degree sunshine.

Fort Mill is a suburb of Charlotte, where I will be the guest of VNLP supporter **Tin Thanh Nguyen**. Tin himself will be in Viet Nam celebrating Tet but I hope to get his law partner **Esteban Echeverria** to come watch me lift weights. Esteban and Tin practice immigration law together so they know all about heavy lifting.

My total for squat, deadlift, and press increased a hundred pounds over the winter, working out at **Matt Crabtree's** gym in a garage in the middle of a cattle operation three miles from VNLP. At the end of each day I turn off the computer, take the dogs along to feed the horses, then hurry over to **Matt's**.

Your support has let VNLP make steady progress for nearly a year. We have categorized all 250 of the articles at Wikivietlit, making each entry a pathway to dozens of others. As you may read on the next page, **David Willson** and **Vo Tay Cuong** have worked with VNLP to expand our wiki's coverage.

With this issue, **Jason Rainey** is halfway through his **Lucy Nguyen** comic strips, and **Jason** has helped prepare for marketing his **Nhat Linh** comic book, to be followed in 2011 by the **Lucy Nguyen** book. We will be putting up excerpts from **Lucy's** book at our website this year as well as **Tran Qui Phiet's** translations from Saigon literary critic **Le Ngoc Tra**.



Thu Huong, her son the immigration attorney **Tin Nguyen**, his former teacher **Dan**, and VNLP author **Ly Lan** at Tin's law firm's naturalization fair, Charlotte, NC, Saturday, October 17, 2009

VNLP webmaster **Philip Arthur Moore**, back in the United States for short break before a lengthy return to Viet Nam, has advised that VNLP redesign our website to better handle all our work. Board member **Tom Enders** has proposed that we display our translations and lesson plans in learning module software, more accessible to busy teachers looking for classroom and homework materials.

Serving teachers with curricular materials is a project that VNLP has every credential to win institutional funding for. We will achieve that program funding by steady work, which itself costs money.

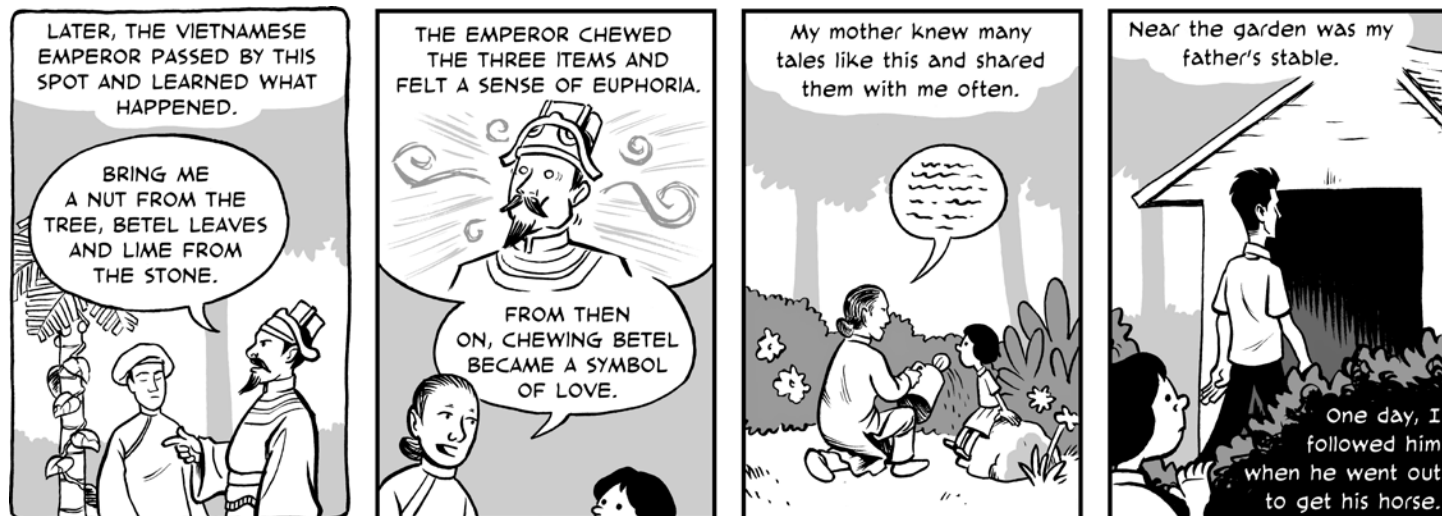
We rely on individual donors for basic costs. Your membership gifts brought in \$10,000 in 2009 and then **Tom Enders** challenged the rest of the board to match his \$5,000 gift over the holiday season. In March, David & Betty Jones matched the entire board grant.

Board member **Jim Friedlander** has suggested that VNLP sponsor a tour of Viet Nam with his Academic Arrangements Abroad. New donor **Victoria Christian** wants to bring in commitments to quarterly or monthly gifts of \$25 to \$200, the regular income which turns our ideas into accomplishment.

Every contribution is a substantial fraction of what we need to make Vietnamese literature accessible in English. We sincerely and specifically appreciate each gift. Please consider helping.

Dan

Editor, **Viet Nam Literature Project**
Literature News, Winter 2010



P R O J E C T S

David Willson Counsels Wikivietlit

David Willson has recommended to VNLP his list of the important American poets and novelists of the wars for Viet Nam. **David** is the beloved author of the novel *REMF Diary*, its sequel *REMF Returns*, and prequel *In the Army Now*, who is further known to collectors, librarians and researchers through his indefatigable *REMF Bibliography* of American literature of the war in Viet Nam. **David** worked closely with **Dan**

to start his entry at Wikivietlit, before contributing the list that will guide VNLP's coverage of foreign writers involved with Viet Nam. This gift of a lifetime's scholarship is all the more remarkable in that it was given in time won from multiple myeloma by chemotherapy and a bone marrow transplant. Dioxin dumped in the water supply at Long Binh, where **David** served as a clerk, caused the cancer. He is now recovering from a second transplant at the Veterans Administration hospital in Seattle, WA.



Wife Michele, daughter Allie, 17, and Tobey with David Willson; not pictured: son Joaquin, 23; October 4 photo in Willson home © 2009 Skip Nelson and ImageTreeMedia.com

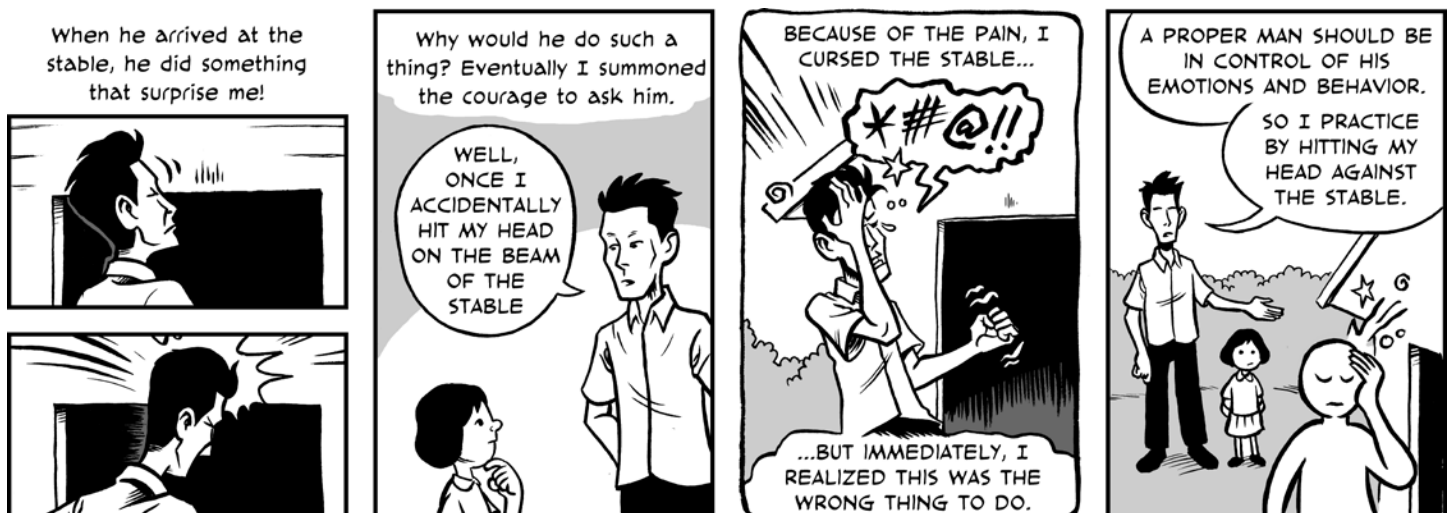
**Vo Tay Cuong Guides Indexers**

Vo Tay Cuong is a professional indexer who contacted **Dan** for advice on how to alphabetize Vietnamese names for an English-language book. **Dan** took the request to the listserv of the Vietnamese Studies Group (Association for Asian Studies), whose members gave counsel on the difficulties of indexing a population whose family names can come first, as with most Vietnamese, last, as with most Vietnamese Americans, and often

include pen names like **Nhat Linh** and reign names like **Ho Chi Minh** which defy all rules. **Vo Tay Cuong** is itself a pseudonym, composed by Wikivietlit editor **Linh Dinh** to conceal the identity of the indexer, who has generously contributed to Wikivietlit his guide to indexing Vietnamese names. The name suggests martial arts and a strong arm, as you would develop in a gym.

Credit and Debit Card Donations

VNLP now accepts debit and credit card donations at <www.vietnamlit.org>, thanks to the Giftworks online donations program. The page suggests contributions from \$25, \$50 or \$100 to help cover the costs of printing and mailing *Literature News*, to \$250, which would provide honorarium and editing for **Vo Tay Cuong**'s entry on indexing Vietnamese names.





Lucy Nguyen's Dragon Child

From "Chapter 3: Marriage & Family", in *A Dragon Child: Reflections of a Daughter of Annam in America*, by Lucy Nguyen. A selection of excerpts will appear at the VNLP website in 2010.

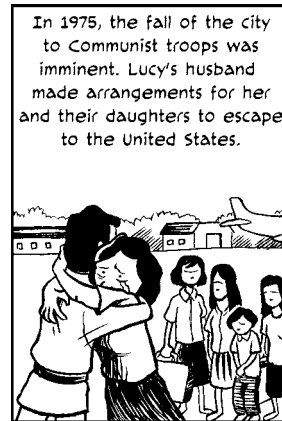
I met my husband during the summer of 1957 while I was at home in Kontum. I first saw him passing my house every morning as he walked to work. He was tall for a Vietnamese man and cut a nice figure in his military officer's uniform. He noticed the young woman standing at the balcony of the house on stilts. I observed him carefully. After two weeks he wrote

me a letter and left it in the fork of the jack tree trunk in front of the house. I saw it but had to wait for an auspicious moment, when no one was around, to rush to the tree and retrieve the letter. My heart pounded; this was my first letter from a man. It was only a brief letter of introduction, but it left me dreaming about him all night.

After that I received a letter from him every day. The mail box was always the same spot in the trunk of the jack tree. The officer signed his name Nguyen Minh Kham but never mentioned his family; most of the letters, written in Vietnamese, were about romantic feelings and love poems quoted from literature books. I was happy enough – and I had never read so much Vietnamese in my life! The important letter asking for a date arrived. What a headache! How could I slip out of the house to meet him? My father always wanted to know my whereabouts.

But fate had its way, and I finally met the officer. In my naivete, I thought we loved each other. He proposed. I accepted. He asked me to set up an appointment for his mother to come and talk to my parents. What a surprise for them!

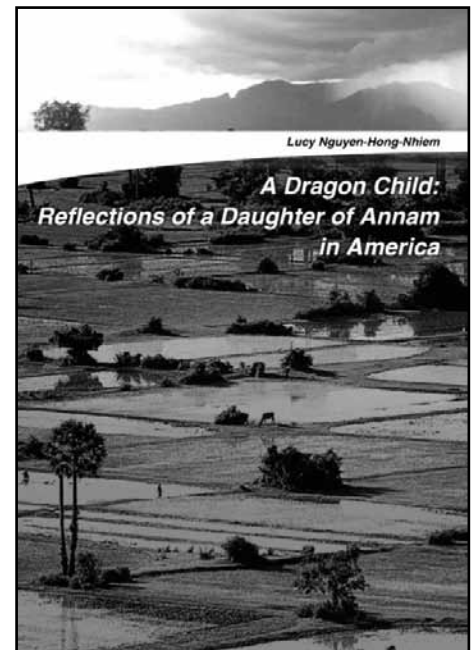
... Upon meeting my future mother-in-law, my father felt she would be a demanding lady of the house, difficult to please, like the traditional ones so often described in the novels by the "Self-Help Literary Group" of the 1930s. These mothers-in-law believed that the daughter-in-law should be trained to serve the family into which she married. She should tend to all the needs of the mother-in-law and be in charge of shopping and preparing food for the whole family. I was far from



Biographical comic strip images by Jason Rainey



that type, for I was used to being served in the French boarding school. Never in my life had I learned to shop or cook. But my father was really worried. He foresaw a life of misery for his favorite daughter. But what could he do to stop me? And my mother, what could she do to stop me? She only cried.

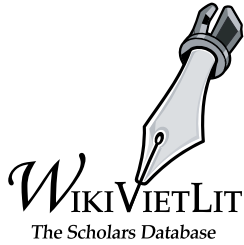


Lucy Nguyen's memoir is available from Amazon. See her entry at Wikivietlit for more on her life and work.

Recurring Gifts and Special Projects

Jason Rainey's four-part comic on the life and work of **Lucy Nguyen** is made possible by a monthly gift made online by credit card. The same donor has committed to the design, production and marketing of next year's comic book of **Lucy's Dragon Child**. Contact **Dan** at editor@vietnamlit.org or go online to support a Viet Nam Literature Comic.

WIKIVIETLIT AUTHOR



Wikivietlit makes Vietnamese literature intellectually accessible with more than 200 articles on authors, works, periods and topics written and revised by subject experts. Editor **Linh Dinh** assures the quality and importance of entries ranging throughout the national literature and diaspora. There have been more than three-quarter of a million views of Wikivietlit since launch.



Linh Dinh, Wikivietlit editor

Thanh Nhung, featured Wikivietlit author Winter 2010

Thanh Nhung is a poet. Her family named her **Cong Huyen Ton Nu Nha Trang**, under which she has published the novel *The Moon of Hoa Binh* (Foundation Autopoy, 1994) with her husband William L. Pensinger, known as Larry, and the essays *Fragments from Memory*, as well as abundant scholarship.

Born to two poets, in a family of royal descent, she began publishing as a girl in the 1950s in the journal *Pho Thong* and continued in association with the movement Bach Nga led by editor **Nguyen Vy**. She has continued at moments through education overseas in Japan and the United States, work in the

war and in dissent in Viet Nam, and in peripatetic diaspora since reunification.

She is a poet both in the modern sense of an individual publishing in magazines and in the classic sense of a scholar official involved with both literate and oral traditions. Her mother suggested the pen name, combining the names of two friends.

Viet Nam Literature Project now hosts the rich websites of both **Thanh Nhung** and **Cong Huyen Ton Nu Nha Trang**, each accessible directly through Google or via her Wikivietlit entries.

Self

Come not to me
Wishing to find perfect beauty
In hair a river of poetry
And laughter inspiration for music.

In the center of my being
Are confused personal feelings and
love for my country.
My words and laughter
Betray the alienation of this century.

I know not how to worship
Jade and glittering gold in multitude.
I write poetry
To sing of human suffering.

My separate world
Is wide open for friends
Lost in the crowd
To gather and talk until dawn.

Please come to me
As one would enter this worldly life
Welcoming surprises gladly
Expecting disappointment.

Penang, April 1975

An earlier translation was published in Westerly, No. 4 (Dec. 1976), p. 30. Poem appears here by permission of the author.

Support Wikivietlit

Wikivietlit expenses, including fees for technical support and honoraria to **Linh Dinh** for editorial supervision, are major items in the VNLN budget. Please consider supporting Wikivietlit by check or at our website.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

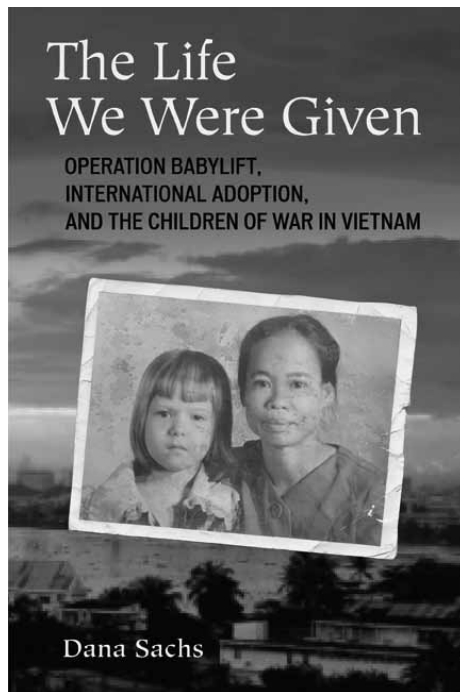
Tour of Viet Nam

VNLP board member **Jim Friedlander** has invited **Dan** aboard *La Marguerite* (named for the the Viet Nam-born French novelist **Duras**) for "Sailing the Mekong Delta", a tour arranged by **Ellen Renstrom** at **Jim's** company Academic Arrangements Abroad, February 3-17, 2011. **Dan** has applied for a visa to find if he can accompany the group into Viet Nam. If he goes, VNLP author **Ly Lan**, born in the Mekong Delta, will meet the ship at Tan Chau, tour Sac Dec and cruise to Cai Be and Saigon with us. **Dan** will proceed to Ha Noi on an optional extension, visiting more writers. For more information about the tour, contact **Claire Baumann** at (212) 514-8921 or <Claire@arrangementsabroad.com>.



Photo © 2009 Jean Libby.

Poet **Nguyen Chi Thien** meditating on the future of **Father Nguyen Van Ly**, imprisoned in Viet Nam since March, 2007 for "propagandizing against the State". The VNLP author participated in the Amnesty International bilingual petition campaign in September, 2009 to release **Father Ly**, gathering several hundred signatures in the Vietnamese American communities in San Jose and Westminster.



VNLP supporter **Dana Sachs'** new book appears from Beacon Press in April, available from Amazon. **Dana** wrote her first book, *House on Dream Street* (Algonquin, 1999), about her life in Ha Noi in the 1990s, and her first novel, *If You Lived Here* (Morrow, 2007), about an adoption to North Carolina from Viet Nam. *The Life We Were Given* draws on extended Fulbright research in Viet Nam as well as in the United States to examine the lives of those adopted to the United States during the fall of Saigon in 1975. **Dana** will be speaking about the book at such events as the Vietnam "Operation Babylift" 35th Anniversary Program on Saturday, April 24, 2010, at the New Jersey Vietnam Era Educational Center in Holmdel, New Jersey. See her book tour schedule at <<http://danasachs.com/events.htm>>. Beacon Press offers a 10% discount and shares revenue with us when you use the code "VNLP" at their site, <www.beacon.org>.

Thanks to Stanley Katz

Stanley Katz, director of the Princeton University Center for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies and founding board member of Books & Authors: Viet Nam, Inc. (d/b/a Viet Nam Literature Project), has stepped down from the board with a generous parting gift.

Thanks to **Stan** for his loyal support.



Mystery Envelope

One of our return envelopes made it back to the office with no donation or note. It is postmarked "South Jersey NJ 08 26 Sep 2009." If you sent VNLP a check that has not cleared, please get in touch.

Versailles Documentary

VNLP supporter **Tin Thanh Nguyen**, the immigration attorney, will host a preview of *A Village Called Versailles*, S. Leo Chiang's film about the Vietnamese fishing village outside New Orleans who rode out Katrina in their church, rebuilt, then successfully resisted a landfill site. **Tin** arranged the advance screening in hope of uniting his own community. 3-6 PM, Sunday, March 28, at the Mint Museum, 2760 Randolph Rd., Charlotte, NC.

Mutual Fund and Stock Donations

VNLP recently set up a Vanguard account to receive Tom Enders' challenge grant to the board. We have now applied as well for a brokerage account at our bank to receive and liquidate any stock donations. Contact **Dan** for details about supporting VNLP with a gift of securities.

T H A N K S

VNLP has established its editorial program with private funding. Seventeen friends have sponsored events to develop support in New York, Washington, DC and North Carolina: **Valerie Asher** in Bethesda, Maryland; **Donna Dennis & Nancy Loudon, Sam Duffy, Nina & Hal Drooker, Tom Enders & Elise Thoron, Carol Irving, Pamela Rosenthal & Samuel Wertheimer** in New York; **Anna & Steve Wilson** in Durham, **Tim & Denise Duffy** and **Katharine Walton & Jaimey Eisler** in Efland.

Major gifts from **Anonymous, Lucy Duffy, Tom Enders & Elise Thoron, and Pamela Rosenthal & Samuel Wertheimer** started the work. Over 2005-7, **Philip Alperson, Anne Asher, Valerie Asher, Kim & Larry Berger, Pete & Kim Delevett, Donna Dennis, Paul Dionne & Jenn Esperanza, Tran Do, Harold & Nina Drooker, Tim & Denise Duffy, Dennis Dunivan, Lan Duong & Viet Nguyen, Anne Frank, Kimloan Hill, Robert Jones III, Chan Khuong, Kim Vu, Ly Lan & Mart Stewart, Khoa Le, Phuong Anh Le, Jean Libby, Noah Long, Sandy Mills, Terri Moore, Yen Ngo, and Dana Sachs, Dzung Sencer, Penny & Bernard Snow, Wee-Teng Soh, Jeneva Stone, C. Michele Thompson, Truong Anh Thuy, Son Truong, Jun Wang** and **David Yin** contributed.

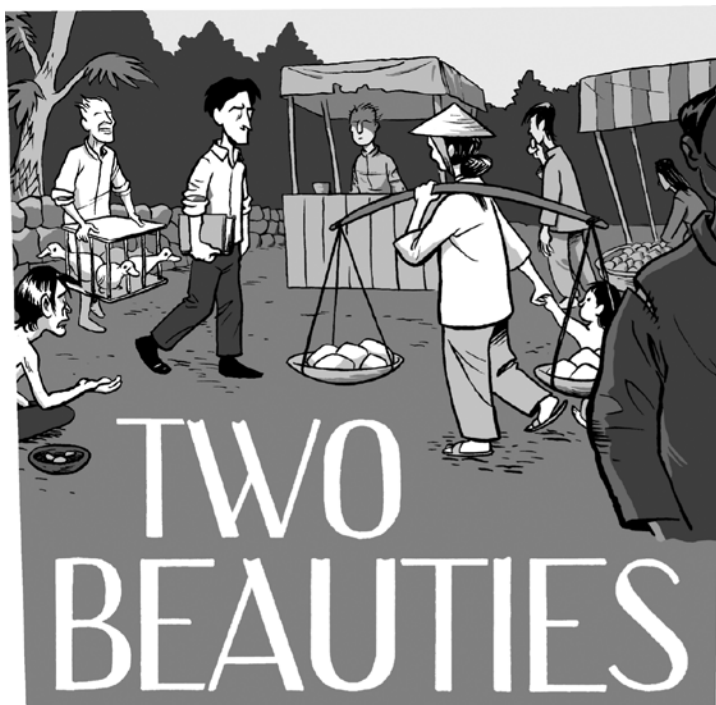
In 2007, **Anh Do** of *Nguoi Viet* newspaper made the first corporate contribution, and **David & Betty Jones** made a major gift and **Charlie Hunter** joined at the project level. The **William Joiner Center** of the **University of Massachusetts, Boston** awarded **Dan** a **Rockefeller** fellowship for academic year 2006-7 to build a reference for and about Vietnamese literature scholars on the VNLP website, launched in March 2007 as **Wikivietlit**. Major gifts from **David & Betty Jones** and **Oz Enders** allowed VNLP to take steps towards professionalization in 2008. **Valerie Asher, Kim & Larry Berger, Pete & Kim Delevett, Paul Dionne & Jenn Esperanza, Nina & Hal Drooker, Lucy Duffy, Anne Frank, Jean Libby, Sandy Mills, Mart Stewart & Ly Lan** all renewed their support in 2008. **Tin Nguyen** joined as a new donor. **Anh Do** renewed the corporate support of the *Nguoi Viet* newspaper at the project level.

Renewed major gifts from **David & Betty Jones** supported our development in 2009. In 2009, **Lisa Brainerd, W. Hodding Carter III, Alan Farrell, Erik Lind Harms, Eric Henry, Jessica Hughes, Jarvis Hunt, Kurt Johnson, Andrew Knox, Cindy Kuster, Martha Moore, Lucy Nguyen, Martha Moore, Alexandra Ottaway, James Peacock, Lydia Petty, Tobias Rettig, Ruth Shapiro, David Willson, Margaret Wise and Jenny Young Dupont** joined as new donors. **Philip Alperson, Valerie Asher, Kim & Larry Berger, Paul Dionne & Jenn Esperanza, Nina & Hal Drooker, Tim & Denise Duffy, Khoa Le, Jean Libby, Sandy Mills, Dana Sachs, Penny & Bernard Snow** and **Michele Thompson** renewed their support, as did **Anh Do** of the *Nguoi Viet* newspaper. New donors **Marion Wood Ahmed, Victoria Christian, Pharibe Wise Hannan, Ngai Nguyen, and Tin Nguyen** provided support at the project level. **Le Phuong Anh, Donna Dennis & Nancy Loudon, Lucy Duffy, and Charlie Hunter** repeated their support at the project level, and **Mart Stewart** and new donor **Robert Anderson** have extended their support especially for the **Le Ngoc Tra** project, while **Anonymous** has supported the **Lucy Nguyen** project. A major challenge from **Tom Enders & Elise Thoron** to the VNLP board for operating capital brought matching gifts and pledges from **Stanley Katz, Jim Friedlander, Pamela Rosenthal, Nancy Seybold, and Peter Delevett**. So far in 2010, **Jackie Zook**, in Acquisitions at the University Wisconsin's **Memorial Library** has joined as a new donor, and **Anonymous, Victoria Christian, Lucy Duffy, Lucy Nguyen, Tobias Rettig, and John & Margaret Wise** have renewed their support. **David & Betty Jones** matched the board's gift.

VNLP Legal Status

VNLP is a d/b/a for **Books & Authors: Viet Nam, Inc.**, a federally recognized 501.c.3 non-profit corporation in North Carolina. VNLP recognizes its authors and editors with modest honoraria and pays contractors and vendors their going rate.

OUR FIRST BOOK



the Life and Art of **NHAT LINH**

Until commercial publication in July, 2010, Viet Nam Literature Project offers *Two Beauties* by Jason Rainey only as a gift to supporters.

Send a donation in any amount to
VNLP, 5600 Buck Quarter Road,
Hillsborough, NC 27278
or donate online at www.vietnamlit.org.

Two Beauties tells the story of the novelist and revolutionary Nhat Linh, adapts his classic fiction of the artist's duty to society, and recounts his heroic suicide.

Jason Rainey has designed the 20-page book from his comics for *Literature News*, the newsletter of the Viet Nam Literature Project, which works to make Vietnamese literature accessible in English.



VIET NAM LITERATURE PROJECT 5600 Buck Quarter Rd.
Hillsborough, NC 27278
tel. 919 383 7274
email - editor@vietnamlit.org
www.vietnamlit.org

*Please consider supporting
the Viet Nam Literature Project.*

☐ **Member (\$25)** covers the cost of preparing and sending you *Literature News*.

☐ **Impresario (\$250)** provides honoraria for a Wikivietlit author of reference articles.

☐ **Supporter (\$50)** or ☐ **Lit Lover (\$100)** helps us send *Literature News* to those who have not yet joined.

☐ **Patron (\$500)** pays the honoraria, production, and promotion costs of a new author page on the VNLP website.