

# Reviewers of the Year 2015 | LJ Reviews

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**Michael Pucci**  
**Head of Collections & Communications,**  
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A relative newcomer to the *LJ* reviewing family, Michael Pucci won me over with his elegant writing and thoughtful analysis, no mean feat in 200 words or less. He quickly became my main critic for big books (literally and figuratively) such as *The Whites*, a crime novel by Richard Price writing as Harry Brandt (“this ‘debut’ novel from Brandt hews closer to the tropes of standard police procedurals than much of Price’s best work,”) or Don Winslow’s *The Cartel* (“The staggering body count will be a challenge for many readers to get past, but the payoffs for those who persevere are immense”). But I also trusted Michael’s judgment in evaluating literary first novels such as Anthony Marra’s *A Constellation of Vital Phenomena* (“the novel’s tone remains optimistic, and its characters retain vast depths of humanity...in spite of their bleak circumstances”) and promising titles from small presses, like Jonathan Papernick’s *The Book of Stone* (“Papernick’s persuasive insights into the nature of fanaticism and its destructive consequences could be applied to any ideology”). I leave it to Michael to describe what reviewing has meant for him and his patrons.—Wilda Williams

“Having relied on *LJ* as an essential source for building my own library’s collection, I was privileged to join the reviewing team four years ago, and I’m honored to receive this recognition today. I have been fortunate to read some terrific books by well-known authors, but I must say that it’s even more rewarding to be one of the first readers of a promising debut or an unfairly obscure novel, to look for a diamonds-in-the-rough and become a champion for it. If a book is a conversation between the author and the reader, I’m proud to play a role in getting that conversation started.”