Kweli
Seventh Annual Color of Children’s Literature Conference

March 25th-27th, 2022
Hosted by Zoom
Co-sponsored by BCRW
BARNARD CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN
TEN YEARS OF

Kweli CONFERENCES
### Saturday, March 26, 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 – 8:45 AM</td>
<td>Welcome by Laura Pegram + Emeline Lee&lt;br&gt;Music &amp; Digital Video by Katie Madison &amp; Deborah Cowell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 – 10 AM</td>
<td>Publishing is a Long Game&lt;br&gt;Revolution in our Time: Nonfiction&lt;br&gt;Pulling at the Heartstrings: Picture Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:15 – 11:15 AM</td>
<td>Don’t Give Up Your Day Job (Yet)&lt;br&gt;This is How We Do It: Conjuring Up Characters &amp; Situations for a MG Novel&lt;br&gt;Marketing and Promotion: What I Wish I Knew Before My Debut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 AM – 12:30 PM</td>
<td>The Heartbeat of Nonfiction&lt;br&gt;Voice &amp; The Novel in Verse&lt;br&gt;From Wisp of an Idea to Final Book&lt;br&gt;Transparency: Developmental and Line Edits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 – 1 PM</td>
<td>Break for Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 1:45 PM</td>
<td>KEYNOTE CONVERSATION with Michaela Goade and Cozbi A. Cabrera moderated by Joanna Ho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 – 3:00 PM</td>
<td>On Identity and Belonging&lt;br&gt;Dear Star Child II: Tell Us About Your Research in World Building&lt;br&gt;Revision &amp; Submission: What to Expect in the Author/ Agent/ Editor Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15 – 4:15 PM</td>
<td>Arab American Kidlit: Challenges and Opportunities&lt;br&gt;First Pages Clinic: Voice and Audience&lt;br&gt;First Look Clinic: Illustration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30 – 5:30 PM</td>
<td>New Editors, New Cultural Conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:45 – 6:30 PM</td>
<td>CLOSING KEYNOTE CONVERSATION with Renée Watson and Jennifer Baker&lt;br&gt;LEGACY AWARDS ANNOUNCEMENT by Noni Carter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See pages 7-9 for details about Friday-Sunday sessions
### SCHEDULE at a glance

**Sunday, March 27, 2022**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 9:30 – 10:45 AM  | Welcome by Laura Pegram + Emeline Lee  
Music & Digital Video by Katie Madison & Deborah Cowell |
| 11 AM – 12 PM    | KEYNOTE INTERVIEW: Daniel Jose Older + Kweli                                       |
| 12 – 1 PM        | LUNCH                                                                             |
| 1:15 – 2:15 PM   | Yuyi Moralaes + Magaly Morales in Conversation with Leah Henderson                 |
| 2:30 – 3:30 PM   | CLOSING KEYNOTE: Nnedi Okorafor + Ibi Zoboi on AfricanFuturism + Akata Woman      |
| 3:45 – 4 PM      | Raffle Winners Announcement  
MUSIC: Katie Madison + Deborah Cowell                                                |

See pages 7-9 for details about Friday-Sunday sessions
Welcome to the 2022 Kweli Color of Children’s Literature Conference!

We’re honored you chose to spend the day with us online, and we hope that you leave feeling educated, energized, and inspired to keep writing and illustrating books for children and young adults. The world needs to hear your voices and see your art; our young people need the chance to discover them. Thank you for your beautiful work.
SOCIAL MEDIA
The official conference hashtag is #Kweli22VIRTUAL. Feel free to post pictures and share wisdom throughout the day, but please also respect any presenters’ requests not to share material from their sessions. Please tag and follow @kwelijournal on Twitter and Instagram and "like" Kweli on Facebook.

BOOK SALES
Shop and order #Kweli22VIRTUAL faculty/attendee books from our official conference bookseller Word Up Community Bookshop. Kweli will receive a percentage of all sales through these purchases. Support the authors and artists who share their work and talents with us! See the link below.

SEE Events tab at wordupbooks.com

AGENT AND EDITOR CRITIQUES
Timeline update: Due to unforeseen delays, agents and editors will receive manuscripts and portfolios later than expected. Accordingly, the window for agents and editors to provide feedback has been extended to ensure quality of commentary. We appreciate your patience with this change. Agents and editors will provide comments between March 27 and April 13. The 15-minute consultations will take place via phone or video call. We ask that you please depart your session on schedule as editors and agents may be scheduled for a number of critiques per day. For expert advice on how to best synthesize feedback, check out the following link: lindasuepark.com/writing/getting-published/critique/.

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY
The Kweli Conference is dedicated to providing a safe, respectful, and harassment-free conference experience for everyone, regardless of gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, body size, race, age, or religion. We will not tolerate harassment or abuse of conference attendees or presenters in any form. Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately; those judged to violate these guidelines may be expelled from the conference without a refund at the discretion of the conference organizers. Should you wish to report an incident, please notify assistant coordinators Leah Henderson, Brian Young, or Sarah K. Choi during the day or e-mail kwelijournal@gmail.com afterward.

ANY REMAINING CONCERNS OR QUESTIONS?
Please email editors@kwelijournal.org.

No recordings, of any kind, are permitted during the conference (i.e., audio, video, vlogs).

CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE
Laura Pegram, Executive Director
Noni Carter
Sarah K. Choi
Susan Muaddi Darraj
Arely Guzmán
Leah Henderson
Cheryl Willis Hudson
Minh Lê
Veronica Liu
Emeline Lee
Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich
Chantel Kelly
Annabella Correa-Maynard
Jada Pegram
Lenay Pegram
Ronda Taylor
J.E. Thomas
Abhi Alwar, Graphic Designer

Cover Art from Daddy Speaks Love, written by Leah Henderson, illustrated by E.B. Lewis

SAVE THE DATE! #KWELI23 will happen April 29 – May 1, 2023.
## Pre-Conference Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, 2022</strong></td>
<td><strong>2:00 PM – 3:00 PM</strong></td>
<td>Ibi Zoboi on <em>The People Remember</em> with Katie V. Madison and Other Musical Guests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2022</strong></td>
<td><strong>7:00 PM - 8:00 PM</strong></td>
<td>Carole Boston Weatherford and Jeffery Boston Weatherford on <em>Call Me Miss Hamilton</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2022</strong></td>
<td><strong>7:00 PM - 8:00 PM</strong></td>
<td>Daniel J. O’Brien on <em>The Carnival Prince</em> with Krystal Sital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2022</strong></td>
<td><strong>7:00 PM - 8:00 PM</strong></td>
<td>Horror in Indigenous Literature with Darcie Little Badger and Andrea L. Rogers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 2022</strong></td>
<td><strong>7:00 PM - 8:00 PM</strong></td>
<td>Tracy Deonn in Conversation with Ibi Zoboi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2022</strong></td>
<td><strong>7:00 PM - 8:00 PM</strong></td>
<td><em>Black Gold</em> with Laura Obuobi &amp; London Ladd, moderated by Eva Lynch-Comer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MASTERCLASSES

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

PICTURE BOOKS

THE ART OF WRITING THE PICTURE BOOK WITH CAROLE BOSTON WEATHERFORD, AUTHOR OF UNSPEAKABLE

Outstanding picture book texts are deceptively simple yet utterly magical. With an award-winning author as your guide, study hybrid-genre mentor texts and the ingenious moves behind them. Examine, and experiment with, premise, structure, verbs, viewpoint and voice. Experience how merging these elements can elevate the narrative to lyric.

NOTE: PLEASE BRING A DRAFT OF YOUR PICTURE BOOK MANUSCRIPT.

1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

CHAPTER BOOKS

WRITING CHAPTER BOOKS: MASTER CLASS WITH SUSAN MUADDI DARRAJ, AUTHOR OF THE FARAH ROCKS SERIES

Kate DiCamillo said, “Reading should not be presented to children as a chore or duty. It should be offered to them as a precious gift.” Chapter books are an important bridge for children who are just beginning to discover the precious gift of independent reading. However, chapter books are not simply “shorter novels” or “easy readers.” Children are insightful and selective readers who want to read engaging books. In this class, writers will bring a chapter book idea (just a bulleted list or paragraph will suffice). We will discuss the genre of chapter books, the important craft elements, and the ways in which one writes for the newly independent reader. Examples from mentor texts will be discussed and studied.

MIDDLE GRADE AND YOUNG ADULT NOVEL

CRAFTING PERSPECTIVE AND POINT-OF-VIEW WITH KEKLA MAGOON, AUTHOR OF THE SEASON OF STYX MALONE AND THE ROCK AND THE RIVER

The key to mastering voice is to fully immerse yourself in your character’s viewpoint and learn to observe the world from within their skin. Via discussion, exercises, and interactive prompts, we will explore craft techniques for grounding your story in the point of view and perspective of your character.

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

YA DEBUT PANEL

Featuring: Camille Gomera-Tavarez, Joanna Ho and Kristen R. Lee; moderated by Samira Ahmed
# PROGRAM SCHEDULE

**Saturday, March 26, 2022**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 8:30 – 8:45 AM | **Welcome by Laura Pegram + Emeline Lee**  
**Music by Katie Madison + Deborah Cowell** |
| 9:00 – 10:00 AM | **A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track**  
**Publishing Is a Long Game**  
**Featuring:** Angeline Boulley, Joanna Ho, Kevin Johnson, Kristen R. Lee and Lisa Stringfellow; moderated by Sarah Choi |
|            | **B. Novels/Memoir Track**  
**Revolution in Our Time: Nonfiction**  
**Featuring:** Kekla Magoon, Aida Salazar and Traci Sorell; moderated by Autumn Allen |
|            | **C. Illustrated Books & Nonfiction Track**  
**Pulling at the Heartstrings: Picture Books**  
**Featuring:** Leah Henderson, Rajani LaRocca, Minh Le and Kim Rogers; moderated by Namrata Tripathi |
| 10:15 – 11:15 AM | **A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track**  
**Don't Give Up Your Day Job (Yet)**  
**Featuring:** Paula Chase, Adib Khorram and Molly O’Neill, moderated by Phoebe Yeh |
|            | **B. Novels/Memoir Track**  
**This is How We Do It: Conjuring Up Characters & Situations for a MG Novel**  
**Featuring:** Amina Luqman-Dawson, Olugbemisola Rhuday Perkovich, Andrea Wang, and Brian Young; moderated by Joanna Cardenas |
|            | **C. Illustrated Books & Nonfiction Track**  
**Marketing and Promotion: What I Wish I Knew Before My Debut (From TikTok Takeaways to Press Kits)**  
**Featuring:** Anne Wynter, Harshita Jerath, Winsome Bingham, Shirin Shamsi, and Lissette J. Norman; moderated by Sheetal Sheth |
11:30 – 12:30 PM

**A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track**

**THE HEARTBEAT OF NONFICTION**
Featuring: Nana Ekua Brew-Hammond, Wade and Cheryl Hudson, Kirsti Jewel and Marilyn Nelson; moderated by Amina Luqman-Dawson

**B. Novels/Memoir Track**

**VOICE & THE NOVEL IN VERSE**
Featuring: Mahogany L. Browne, Candice Iloh, and Elisabet Velasquez; moderated by Rajani LaRocca

**C. Illustrated Books & Nonfiction Track**

**FROM WISP OF AN IDEA TO FINAL BOOK**
Featuring: Tricia Elam Walker, Gloria Amescua, Emeline Lee, Xelena Gonzalez, Laura Obuobi; moderated by Minh Le

**D. Intensives Track**

**TRANSPARENCY Q&A**

12:30 – 1:00 PM  BREAK FOR LUNCH

1:00 – 1:45 PM  KEYNOTE CONVERSATION WITH MICHAELA GOADE AND COZBI A. CABRERA, MODERATED BY JOANNA HO

2:00 – 3:00 PM

**A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track**

**ON IDENTITY AND BELONGING**
Featuring: Schuyler Bailar and Brian Young; moderated by Autumn Allen

**B. Novels/Memoir Track**

**DEAR STAR CHILD II: TELL US ABOUT YOUR RESEARCH IN WORLD BUILDING**
Featuring: Zetta Elliot, Lisa Stringfellow and Julian Randall; moderated by Arely Guzman

**C. Illustrated Books & Nonfiction Track**

**REVISION & SUBMISSION: WHAT TO EXPECT IN THE AUTHOR/ AGENT/ EDITOR RELATIONSHIP**
Featuring: Brittany J. Thurman & Marietta B. Zacker, Nasugraq Rainey Hopson & Connie Hsu; moderated by Alvina Ling
PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Saturday, March 26, 2022

3:15 – 4:15 PM
A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track
   ARAB AMERICAN KIDLIT: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES
   Featuring: Susannah Aziz, Hayan Charara, Aya Khalil and Rhonda Roumani; moderated by Susan Muaddi Darraj

B. Novels/Memoir Track
   FIRST PAGES CLINIC: VOICE AND AUDIENCE
   Featuring: Alvina Ling, Meghan McCullough and Joanna Cardenas; moderated by Arely Guzman

C. Illustrated Books & Nonfiction Track
   FIRST LOOK CLINIC: ILLUSTRATION
              moderated by Isabel Roxas

4:30 – 5:30 PM
A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track
   NEW EDITORS, NEW CULTURAL CONVERSATIONS
   Featuring: Autumn Allen (Barefoot Books), Tiffany Liao (Zando Projects) and Irene Vazquez (Levine Querido);
              moderated by Alvina Ling

5:45 – 6:30 PM
CLOSING KEYNOTE CONVERSATION WITH RENÉE WATSON AND JENNIFER BAKER
LEGACY AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT BY NONI CARTER
Sunday, March 27, 2022

9:30 - 10:45 AM
ARTISTS ON SELF CARE: SCREENING OF TALLAHASSEE SHORT FILM
+ HALA ALYAN AND MAHOGANY L. BROWNE IN CONVERSATION

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
KEYNOTE INTERVIEW: DANIEL JOSE OLDER + KWELI

12:00 - 1:00 PM
LUNCH BREAK

1:15 - 2:15 PM
YUYI MORALAES + MAGALY MORALES IN CONVERSATION WITH LEAH HENDERSON

2:30 - 3:30 PM
CLOSING KEYNOTE: NNEDI OKORAFOR
+ IBI ZOBOI ON AFRICANFUTURISM
+ AKATA WOMAN

3:45 - 4:00 PM
RAFFLE WINNERS ANNOUNCEMENT
MUSIC: KATIE MADISON + DEBORAH COWELL
## Post-Conference Events

**Sunday, April 3, 2022**

### LAURA PEGRAM AS HOST
**Ask Me Anything Sessions (Open to All #Kweli22Virtual Registrants)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 10:00 - 10:45 AM | AMA on Perspective/POV  
Irene Vazquez, Olugbemisola Rhuday Perkovich, Amina Luqman-Dawson; moderated by Arely Guzman |
| 11:00 - 11:45 AM | AMA on Writing Picture Books  
Arthur Levine + Andrea Wang + Anne Wynter |
| 12:00 - 12:45 PM | Business & Contracts 101  
Cheryl Klein |

### CHANTEL KELLY AS HOST
**30 Minute Roundtables with Editors and Agents (8 - 10 People Maximum)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 10:00 - 10:30 AM | Editor / Agent Roundtable  
Jessica Echeverria and Wendi Gu |
| 10:30 - 11:00 AM | Editor / Agent Roundtable  
Jessica Echeverria and Wendi Gu |
| 11:15 - 11:45 AM | Roundtable  
Sydnee Monday and Abigail Frank |
| 11:45 - 12:15PM | Roundtable  
Sydnee Monday and Abigail Frank |

### RONDA TAYLOR AS HOST
**30 Minute Roundtables with Editors and Agents (8 - 10 People Maximum)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 10:00 - 10:30 AM | Roundtable  
Serene Hakim and Stefanie Sanchez Von Borstel |
| 10:30 - 11:00 AM | Roundtable  
Serene Hakim and Stefanie Sanchez Von Borstel |
| 11:15 - 11:45 AM | Roundtable  
Graphic Novel Editor Roundtable  
Clarissa Wong (Scholastic) and Kelly Fernandez (8 people) |
| 11:45 - 12:15PM | Roundtable  
Marketing & Publicity Roundtable  
Caite Arocho and Kim Small (PRH) (15 people) |
Thanks its Advertisers, Sponsors & Supporters!
Samira Ahmed  
**she/her/hers | www.samiraahmed.com | 🌐@sam_aye_ahm**  
Samira Ahmed is the New York Times bestselling author of stories about revolutionary girls. Her novels include, *Internment, Love Hate & Other Filters, Mad Bad & Dangerous to Know*, the Amira & Hamza series, and the forthcoming *Hollow Fires*. She also writes the Ms. Marvel comic books. Samira currently lives in the Midwest. When she’s not writing or reading, she can be found on her lifelong quest for the perfect pastry.  
**Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Amira & Hamza: The War to Save the Worlds**  
**Next Book to Watch For: Hollow Fires** (May 10, 2022)  
**Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Aisha Saeed, Omar Rising**

Autumn Allen  
**Senior Editor, Barefoot Books | she/her | autumnallenbooks.com | 🌐@AutumnAAAllen | 📖@autumnallenbooks**  
Autumn Allen is a writer, an editor, an educator, and a reviewer of books for young people. She is a senior editor at Barefoot Books, a small, independent publisher of children’s books in Massachusetts, where she acquires and develops picture books and board books.  
Autumn was the 2020-21 Writer in Residence selected by the Associates of the Boston Public Library, where she worked on her young adult novel, *All You Have to Do*, which also won a Susan P. Bloom Discovery Award. Her debut picture book, *Step On Board*, illustrated by Ekua Holmes, will be published by Knopf in 2025.  
**Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): (in progress)**  
**Next Book to Watch For: Step on Board** (2025) - (this may change!)  
**Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Karen English / Jenny Torres Sanchez, We Are Not from Here**  
- **Seeking: Picture book manuscript**  
- **To submit: Email submissions as an attachment or in the body of an email, with Kweli22 and the manuscript title in the subject line, to autumn.allen@barefootbooks.com**

Abhi Alwar  
**she/her/hers | www.abhialwar.com | 🌐@abhi_alwar**  
Abhi Alwar is an artist and designer who was born in India, raised in Illinois, and is currently based in NYC. Her debut picture book as an illustrator, *Hamsters Make Terrible Roommates* written by Cheryl B. Klein, was published by Dial Books for Young Readers in November 2021. Her forthcoming books include the middle grade graphic novel *Super Pancake* (Knopf, 2023) written by Megan Wagner Lloyd, and the picture book *Summer is For Cousins* (Abrams, 2023) written by Rajani LaRocca. She loves oddball characters, truly upsetting puns, and especially enjoys working on stories that make her laugh.  
**Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Hamsters Make Terrible Roommates, written by Cheryl B. Klein**  
**Next Book to Watch For: Super Pancake** (Knopf, Spring 2023); *Summer is For Cousins* (Summer 2023)  
**Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Home Is Not A Country by Safi a Elhillo**

Hala Alyan  
**she/her/hers | halaalyan.com | hala.n.alyan**  
Hala Alyan is a Palestinian American writer and clinical psychologist whose work has appeared in *The New York Times, Poetry, Guernica* and elsewhere. Her poetry collections have won the Arab American Book Award and the Crab Orchard Series. Her debut novel, *Salt Houses*, was published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt in 2017, and was the winner of the Arab American Book Award and the Dayton Literary Peace Prize. Her second novel, *The Arsonists' City*, was recently published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Hala lives in Brooklyn with her husband and dog.  
**Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): The Arsonist's City**  
**Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri**
Gloria Amescua

Gloria Amescua (Ah MES qua) has been a writer since she was a child, writing poems and stories throughout her life. She loves books that reach a young person’s heart, head or funny bone and strives to do just that in her writing. She is an educator, poet and children’s book writer. Abrams Books for Young Readers publishes her picture book biography in verse, Child of the Flower-Song People: Luz Jiménez, Daughter of the Nahua, August 17, 2021. Duncan Tonatiuh is the illustrator. An earlier version won the 2016 Lee & Low New Voices Honor Award. A variety of literary journals and anthologies have published Gloria’s poetry.

Caite Arocho  Marketing Coordinator, Random House Children’s Books

she/her/hers

Caite Arocho is a Marketing Coordinator at Random House Children’s Books, specializing in middle grade titles. Prior to this, she worked as a Marketing Lead at Outside the Lens, a nonprofit that seeks to elevate unique, community-based stories. With every title that she works on, Caite strives to build a creative campaign that engages new readers and allows the story to shine authentically.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Marketed - Operation Sisterhood

Next Book to Watch For: Iveliz Explains It All (September 2022)

Susannah Aziz

she/her/hers | susannahaziz.com | @librarycatnyc | @susannah29

Susannah Aziz is a creative/freelance writer and children’s book author living in NYC. She writes stories that focus on Arab and Muslim characters and hopes to see more culturally diverse characters, as well as neurodiverse characters represented in traditional publishing. Her debut picture book, Halal Hot Dogs (Little Bee Books), features an Arab-Muslim character named Musa that enjoys a special treat with his family after Jummah prayer at the local masjid. Susannah is also a librarian with a MLSIS from St. John’s University (NYC). She hopes to create more library programs for children with Autism. As an urban librarian, she loves running into patrons all around town. Susannah also spent some time teaching as a middle school educator at an Islamic School. She is an advocate for UNRWAUSA www.unrwausa.org/. UNRWA USA National Committee (UNRWA USA) aims to promote a life of dignity and human development for Palestine refugees by informing the American public about UNRWA’s work and generating support for its programs in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan.

Susannah lives in a very old, creaky, squeaky house with her husband, three kids, and cat. Her favorite summer activity with her kids includes trying to hit every halal hot dog stand in NYC in search of the BEST hot dog! They still can’t decide on just one!

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Halal Hot Dogs

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Rifk Ebeid, Baba, What Does My Name Mean?

Schuyler Bailar

he/him/his | pinkmantaray.com | @pinkmantaray | /pinkmantaray | @sb_pinkmantaray

Schuyler Bailar (he/him) is the first transgender athlete to compete in any sport on an NCAA Division 1 men’s team. By 15, he was one of the nation’s top-20 15-year-old breast-strokers. By 17, he set a national age-group record. In college, he swam for Harvard University, on Harvard’s winningest team in 50 years. Schuyler’s difficult choice—to transition while potentially giving up the prospect of being an NCAA Champion—was historic. His story has appeared everywhere from 60 Minutes to The Washington Post and The Olympic Channel. Schuyler’s tireless advocacy has earned him numerous honors including The Out100 and LGBTQ Nation’s Instagram Advocate for 2020. Obie Is Man Enough is Schuyler’s first novel.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Obie Is Man Enough

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Anything by Jason Reynolds! Or If I Was Your Girl by Meredith Russo

Jennifer Baker  Senior Editor, Amistad Books

she/her/hers | www.jennifernbaker.com | @jbakernyc

Jennifer Baker is a publishing professional of almost 20 years, creator/host of the Minorities in Publishing podcast, and faculty member of the MFA program in Creative Nonfiction at Bay Path University. Formerly a contributing editor to Electric Literature, she received a 2017 NYSCA/NYFA Fellowship and a Queens Council on the Arts New Work Grant for Nonfiction Literature. Her essay “What We Aren’t (or the Ongoing Divide)” was listed as a Notable Essay in The Best American Essays 2018. In 2019, she was named Publishers Weekly Superstar for her contributions to inclusion and representation in publishing. Jennifer is also the editor of the BIPOC short story anthology Everyday
People: The Color Of Life (Atria Books, 2018) and the author of the forthcoming novel Forgive Me Not (Putnam BFYR, 2022). She has volunteered with organizations such as We Need Diverse Books andToo Arts Collective, and spoken widely on topics of inclusion, the craft of writing/editing, podcasting, and the inner-workings of the publishing industry. Her fiction, nonfiction, and criticism has appeared in various print and online publications. Her website is: jennifernbaker.com.

Next Book to Watch For: Forgive Me Not (Oct. 2022, Putnam Books for Young Readers)
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Leah Henderson

Winsome Bingham
Winsome Bingham is a soul food connoisseur, master cook, and a US Army war and disabled veteran. She received both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in education and an MFA in Writing For Children and Young Adults. She has more than 15 years of teaching experience. You can find her writing on a deck while waiting patiently with a camera to capture a submarine shooting out of the water. Bingham’s debut picture book, Soul Food Sunday, illustrated by Charles G. Esperanza, was published September 14, 2021 by Abrams Books.

Carole Boston Weatherford

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Call Me Miss Hamilton: One Woman’s Fight for Equality and Respect
Next Book to Watch For: Grandma and Me; Sourcebooks, March 1, 2022
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Marilyn Nelson

Angeline Boulley
Angeline Boulley (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians) is a #1 New York Times bestselling author. Her debut, Firekeeper’s Daughter, won the 2022 Michael L. Printz Award for excellence in literature written for young adults and the 2022 William C. Morris Award for a debut book published by a first-time author writing for teens. It was an American Indian Youth Literature Award Young Adult Honor Book and won the 2022 Walter Dean Myers Award for Outstanding Children’s Literature in the Teen category. The Obamas’ Higher Ground Productions is adapting it for a Netflix series.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Firekeeper’s Daughter
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: The Mason House by T. Marie Bertineau

Mahogany L. Browne
Mahogany L. Browne, selected as Kennedy Center’s Next 50, is the Executive Director of JustMedia, a media literacy initiative with a focus on the criminal legal system, and is informed by her career as a writer, organizer, & educator. Browne has received fellowships from Art for Justice Fund, Air Serenbe, Cave Canem, Poets House, Mellon Research & Rauschenberg. She is the author of recent works: Vinyl Moon, Chlorine Sky, Woke: A Young Poets Call to Justice, Woke Baby, Black Girl Magic & book-length poem: I Remember Death By Its Proximity to What I Love. She is the founder of Woke Baby Book Fair, a traveling diverse reading campaign, and is the first-ever poet-in-residence at the Lincoln Center and lives in Brooklyn, NY.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Vinyl Moon, Crown Books
Next Book to Watch For: Epicenter, September 2023
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Kristen R. Lee
Cozbi A. Cabrera  
**she/her/hers | www.cozbi.com | @cozbi | @cozbihandmade**

Cozbi A. Cabrera is the author/illustrator of *Me & Mama* (2021 Coretta Scott King Honor/Caldecott Honor) and *My Hair is A Garden* deemed by Kirkus as “how needed, how refreshing.” Her star reviewed illustrated titles include *Exquisite: The Poetry and Life of Gwendolyn Brooks* by Suzanne Slade (2021 ALA Sibert Informational Award Honor/Coretta Scott King Honor), *Most Loved In All The World* by Tonya Cherie Hegamin, *Stitchin’ and Pullin’ A Gees Bend Quilt* by Patricia McKissack, *Thanks A Million* by Nikki Grimes. Cozbi has been a contributing illustrator for various titles including *Our Children Can Soar* by Michelle Cook (NAACP Image Award).

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Me & Mama*  
Next Book to Watch For: *Edna: Queen of Southern Cooking* written by Melvina Noel, Jan 23  
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Amina Luqman Dawson

Joanna Cárdenas  **Senior Editor, Kokila**  
**she/her/hers | penguin.com/kokila-books-overview/ | @joannananamc**

Joanna Cárdenas has worked on critically-acclaimed and award-winning books like *The First Rule of Punk* by Celia C. Pérez and *Stand Up Yumi Chung* by Jessica Kim, and she’s excited for you to fall in love with upcoming books like *Kings of B’more* by R. Eric Thomas and *Twelve Dinging Doorbells* by Tamika Fryer Brown and Ebony Glenn. Joanna is co-founder of the Representation Matters Mentor Program for aspiring editors of color, and she was previously on the board of Latinx in Publishing. Joanna is looking for books across genres and formats that have great comedic timing; center joy, creativity, and imagination; explore our roles as global citizens; and celebrate romantic and platonic love.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *J.D. and the Hair Show Showdown* by J. Dillard, illustrated by Akeem S. Roberts  
Next Book to Watch For: *Kings of B’more* by R. Eric Thomas (May 31, 2022)  
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: The Ryan Hard series

Hayan Charara  
**he/him/his | www.hayancharara.com**


Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Three Lucys* (Lee & Low Books, 2016)  
Next Book to Watch For: *These Trees, Those Leaves, This Flower, That Fruit* (April 2022)  
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Randa Jarrar’s *Me, Him, Muhammad Ali*

Paula Chase  
**she/her/hers | paulachasebooks.com | @ThatMGBookchick | @ThatPaulaChase**

Co-founder of the award-winning blog, The Brown Bookshelf, Paula Chase is a longtime Inclusion Jedi and advocate for diversifying the type of fiction featuring Black characters that’s highlighted among educators, librarians and parents. She’s presented and blogged about the need to expand the focus beyond children’s literature that centers the pain of the Black experience and is the 2021 recipient of the Assembly on Literature for Adolescents (ALAN) Konigsberg Award for her advocacy. Chase is the author of nine children’s books. *So Done* (Greenwillow/HarperCollins), her critically acclaimed middle grade debut, was named a 2018 Kirkus Reviews Best Book. *So Done* and its companions, *Dough Boys* and *Turning Point* are blazing the trail for books that tackle tough and sometimes taboo topics for younger readers. Her latest novel, *Keeping It Real*, focuses on classism in the Black community and impact of family secrets.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Keeping it Real*  
Next Book to Watch For: *The Heights*  
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Ronni Davis - *When the Stars Lead To You*
Deborah Cowell  
**she/her/hers | @deborah.cowell | @deborah_bklyn**

Deborah Cowell is a product of the public school system, first grade through graduate school. She is an editor, writer, digital artist specializing in black and white photography and film. She was born and raised in New York City.

Next Book to Watch For: *b. 1969*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *How to Love a Jamaican* by Alexia Arthurs

---

Erica De Chavez  
**she/her/hers | www.PandaErica.com | @PandaErica**


Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Designed: *Popularmmos #4: Presents Into the Overworld*; *Lightfall #2: Shadow of the Bird*

Next Book to Watch For: *Bye Bye, Binary* (5/2/22); *The Capitol: A Meet the Nation's Capitol Book* (8/16/22)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *When Lola Visits* by Michelle Sterling and Aaron Asis

---

Tracy Deonn  
**she/her/hers | www.tracydeonn.com | @tracydeonn**

Tracy Deonn is the *New York Times* bestselling and Coretta Scott King - John Steptoe Award-winning author of *Legendborn*, and its sequel *Bloodmarked*. A second-generation fangirl, after earning her master’s degrees in communication from UNC-Chapel Hill, she worked in live theater, video games, and K–12 education. When she's not writing, Tracy speaks on panels at SFF conventions, reads fanfic, and keeps an eye out for ginger-flavored everything.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Legendborn*

Next Book to Watch For: *Bloodmarked* (November 8, 2022)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Any book by Bethany C. Morrow; Especially So Many Beginnings*

---

Jessica Echeverria  
**Executive Editor, Lee & Low Books**  
**she/her/hers**

Jessica Echeverria is an executive editor at Lee & Low Books. She began her career at Simon & Schuster Simon Spotlight, where she worked on licensed properties, brands, and developing new paperback series. In 2012, she joined Lee & Low to help bring more diverse voices and stories to children's publishing. She is interested in picture books that feature strong or quirky characters, stories with lots of heart, humor, and culture, and on her ultimate wishlist is to work on a wordless picture book.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Juna And Appa* by Jane Park, illustrated by Felicia Hoshino

Next Book to Watch For: *Marvelous Mabel: Figure Skating Superstar* by Crystal Hubbard, illustrated by Alleanna Harris

---

Nana Ekua Brew-Hammond  
**she/her/hers | NanaBrewHammond.com | @nanaekuawriter**


Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Blue: A History of the Color as Deep as the Sea and as Wide as the Sky*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Bisi Adjapon’s The Teller Of Secrets*. 
Tricia Elam Walker
she/her/hers | triciaelamwalker.com | @triciawriting | Tricia Elam Walker | @triciabreathing

Tricia Elam Walker is author of the novel, Breathing Room. Her first children’s book, Nana Akua Goes to School, was published by Random House in June 2020 and won a 2021 Children’s Africana Book Award and the 2021 Ezra Jack Keats writer award. Her second picture book, Dream Street was published in November 2021, has garnered five starred reviews and is a New York Times Best Children's Book of 2021 selection. Tricia is an Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at Howard University.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Dream Street
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: When Langston Dances by Kaija Langley

Zetta Elliott
she/her/hers | zettaelliott.com | @zetelliott

Zetta Elliott is the author of over forty books for young readers, including the award-winning picture books Bird, Melena’s Jubilee, and A Place Inside of Me. Dragons in a Bag, a middle grade fantasy novel, was selected for the 2021 Global Read Aloud. The sequel, The Dragon Thief, was named one of the best books of 2019 by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center. Her young adult poetry collection, Say Her Name, was nominated for the YALSA Excellence in Nonfiction Award. Her own imprint, Rosetta Press, generates culturally relevant stories that center children who have been marginalized, misrepresented, and/or rendered invisible in traditional children’s literature.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): The Witch’s Apprentice
Next Book to Watch For: Moonwalking (FSG, April 22/22)
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Laura Obuobi, Black Gold

Kelly Fernández
she/her/hers | www.kellyfernandez.net | @k3llyfernandez | kellyfernandez_

Kelly Fernández is a cartoonist who was born and raised in Queens, New York. Her family is from the Dominican Republic, whose folklore and culture she draws inspiration from. Her debut graphic novel, ¡¡Manu!!, was published by Scholastic Graphix and has received starred reviews from Kirkus, Publisher’s Weekly, and Booklist. Her work has been featured in a number of comic anthologies such as Dates, Mine!, and Tales from la Vida. She has also done illustrative work for Cicada magazine and received the 2017 Cupcake Award from the Chicago Alternative Comics Expo (CAKE).

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): ¡¡Manu!!: A Graphic Novel, Publisher: Scholastic Graphix, Date: November 2, 2021
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Doodles from the Boogie Down by Stephanie Rodriguez, Spring 2023 from Kokila

Abigail Frank  Associate Agent, Sanford J. Greenburger Associates
she/her/hers | greenburger.com/agent/abigail-frank | @abigailcrfrank

Abigail is passionate about stories for young people, especially those that are hilarious, poetic, quietly heartbreaking, and/or swoon-worthy, and she cares about voice, above all. She is committed to advocating for the work of authors and artists with marginalized identities, and she’s actively looking for stories that allow young readers to recognize themselves in the books they love. She’s also reading select adult projects, focusing on rom-coms. Abigail joined the Greenburger team in 2017 after interning at Writers House. She graduated with a degree in English from Swarthmore College and worked in healthcare before pursuing her passion for books.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Once Upon A Forest by Pam Fong
Next Book to Watch For: How To Date A Superhero (And Not Die Trying) by Cristina Fernandez, out in August 2022
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: I can’t wait for people to get to read This Place Is Still Beautiful by XIXI Tian when it comes out in June!
» Seeking: Picture book manuscript, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Nonfiction, Realistic contemporary, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Romance, Rhyming text/Poetry, Graphic novels, Illustration portfolios
» To submit: Query Abigail at afrank@sjga.com under the subject line “KWELI 2022 Query– [project title].” Please include a brief bio in your cover letter and your full manuscript or proposal as an attachment. If you are a visual artist, please also include a link to your portfolio.

Adriana M. Garcia
she/her/hers | www.adrianamjgarcia.com | @adrianamjgarcia | /adriana.m.garcia.14
adrianamjgarcia

A San Anto, Texas native, Adriana M. Garcia, is a Chicana muralist turned illustrator which she likes to think of as mini murals for book lovers. Her debut picture book All Around Us (by Xelena Gonzalez, Cinco Puntos Press) was awarded the prestigious 2018 Pura Belpre Honor for illustration, and the 2018 Tomas Rivera Award among other honors. She hopes her second book Where Wonder Grows by the same author and press will inspire young ones to spend time in nature and listen to what our elders have to say.

Tweet what you learn and love! Tag @kwelijournal #Kweli22Virtual
Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): “Where Wonder Grows” by Xelena Gonzalez illustrated by Adriana M. Garcia

Next Book to Watch For: The Turquoise Room by Monica Brown illustrated by Adriana M. Garcia Sept 2023;

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: The First Rule of Punk by Celia C. Perez; The Canción Cannibal Cabaret & Other Songs by Amalia L. Ortiz (Aztlán Liber Press)

Michaela Goade
she/her/hers | michaelagoade.com | @michaelagoade | @MichaelaGoade

Michaela is a Caldecott Medalist and #1 New York Times Bestselling illustrator. She is the illustrator of a number of award-winning and bestselling books, including We Are Water Protectors by Carole Lindstrom, I Sang You Down from the Stars by Tasha Spillett-Sumner, and Shanyaak’utlaax: Salmon Boy. Her first self-authored picture book Berry Song is set to release July 2022. Michaela is a member of the Lingít Nation and grew up along the southeast coast of Alaska. She currently lives in Sheet'ká or Sitka, Alaska, an island at the edge of a wide, wild sea.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): I Sang You Down from the Stars by Tasha Spillett Sumner (Little, Brown)

Next Book to Watch For: Berry Song by Michaela Goade (Little, Brown, July 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Tasha Spillett-Sumner

Camille Gomera-Tavarez
she/her/hers | www.cgtdesign.net | @cgomeratavarez

Camille Gomera-Tavarez is an Afro-Dominican writer, designer, and creative from Clifton, New Jersey. She has a BFA in Graphic Design & Creative Writing from the Maryland Institute College of Art and is currently based in Philadelphia, PA. High Spirits: Short Stories on Dominican Diaspora is her debut novel.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): High Spirits (4/12/22)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Frying Plantain by Zalika Reid-Benta

Xelena González
she/her/hers | XELENA.SPACE | @xfactor.live | Xelena Gonzalez

Xelena González is a storyteller, poet, and visiting author who centers self-love in her multi-disciplinary workshops for all ages. Her picture books include the recently-released Where Wonder Grows and All Around Us, winner of multiple accolades, including the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children’s Book Award and an American Indian Youth Literature Honor Award. Her third collaboration with friend and muralist Adriana M. Garcia will be released by Simon & Schuster in 2023. Xelena’s storytelling skills were honed as a public librarian in her hometown of Yanaguana/San Antonio and in Guangzhou, China, where she served as head librarian for an international school.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): WHERE WONDER GROWS

Next Book to Watch For: REMEMBERING (Simon & Schuster, 2023)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: El’s Mirror by Ellison & Bavu Blakes

Arely Guzmán Kweli Contributing Editor
They/She | @areliteration

Arely Guzmán is a Kweli contributor who grew up in the Tijuana/ San Diego border. They have worked as an intern at Writers House and Bloomsbury and as an editorial assistant at Penguin Random House. She is fascinated by stories that navigate in-between and intersectional identities, particularly those of Latinx and queer communities. You can often find them reading a good book, obsessing over tea or engaging in deep conversations with her cat.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Bitter by Akwaeke Emezi

Next Book to Watch For: Does My Body Offend You? by Mayra Cuevas and Marie Marquardt

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: We Belong by Cookie Hiponia Everman

Serene Hakim Ayesha Pande Literary
she/her/hers | www.pandeliterary.com | @serenemaria

Serene Hakim is an agent at Ayesha Pande Literary. She represents authors in a variety of genres, from MG fantasy to adult literary fiction to contemporary YA. Serene is particularly interested in both YA and adult fiction that has international themes, highlights a variety of cultures and focuses on underrepresented and/or marginalized voices. Specifically, she’s looking for writing that explores different meanings of identity, home, family and parenthood/ motherhood. Her educational background is in French and Women’s Studies and she holds an M.A. in French-English Translation from NYU.
Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Fiona & Jane* by Jean Chen Ho (Viking, 1/4/22)
Next Book to Watch For: *Cece Rios And The King Of Fears* by Kaela Rivera (HarperChildren's, 9/27/22)
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *One Of The Good Ones* by Maika Moulite & Maritza Moulite
- Seeking: Middle-grade, Young adult, Realistic contemporary, Short stories
- To submit: Please submit via the query form on our website: www.pandeliterary.com/queries-pandeliterary

**Leah Henderson**  
*she/her/hers | www.leahhendersonbooks.com | @LeahsMark | @Leahs_Mark*

Leah Henderson is the author of several critically acclaimed books for young readers including *Daddy Speaks Love, A Day for Rememberin';* and *Together We March.* Her middle grade novels include *The Magic in Changing Your Stars* and *One Shadow on the Wall.* Leah holds an MFA in Writing and is on faculty in Spalding University's graduate writing program.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Daddy Speaks Love*
Next Book to Watch For: *Your Voice, Your Vote*

**Joanna Ho**  
*she/her/hers | joannahowrites.com | @Joannahowrites*

Joanna Ho is the *New York Times* best-selling author of *Eyes that Kiss in the Corners, Playing at the Border: A Story of Yo-Yo Ma,* and *Eyes that Speak to the Stars.* She is a writer and educator with a passion for anti-bias, anti-racism and equity work. Her debut YA novel, *The Silence that Binds Us* will be released in June 2022 with more books on the way. She is currently the vice principal of a high school in the Bay Area, where she survives on homemade chocolate chip cookies, outdoor adventures, and dance parties with her kids.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Eyes that Speak to the Stars*
Next Book to Watch For: *The Silence that Binds Us (June 2022)*
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Anything by Mike Jung

**Connie Hsu**  
*Editorial Director, Roaring Brook Press*

She was born in Taiwan and grew up in Alabama, though Connie admits to being “one of THOSE editors” who didn’t dream of working in publishing when she was younger. She has edited books by Dan Santat, Kevin Noble Maillard and Nasugraq Rainey Hopson.

**Wade Hudson**  
*President, Just Us Books, Author he/him/his | www.justusbooks.com | @wade.hudson2*

Wade Hudson is the author of more than thirty-five books for young readers and is co-founder of Just Us Books, Inc. His most recently published titles include *Recognize! An Anthology Honoring and Amplifying Black Life* (co-edited with his wife, Cheryl) and the coming-of-age-memoir, *Defiant—Growing Up in the Jim Crow South,* both published by Crown Books for Young Readers. He is also president of Just Us Books, a children and young adult book publishing company he and his wife founded in 1988.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Defiant, Growing Up in the Jim Crow South*
Next Book to Watch For: *The Founding Fathers & Mothers of Black America,* illustrated by E.B. Lewis, published by Calkins Creek Books
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *A Sitting In St. James* by Rita Williams-Garcia

**Candice Iloh**  
*they/them/theirs | becomher.com | @candiceiloh | @thisiscandiceiloh*

Candice Iloh is a first-generation Nigerian American writer and dancer from the Midwest by way of Washington, D.C. and Brooklyn, New York. They are a proud alumna of the Rhode Island Writers Colony and their work has earned fellowships from Lambda Literary, VONA, Kimbilio Fiction and a residency with Hi-ARTS, where they debuted their first one-person show in 2018. Candice became a 2020 National Book Award Finalist and in 2021, a Printz Award Honoree for their debut novel, *Every Body Looking.* Their forthcoming novel, *Break This House,* is out in May 2022.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Every Body Looking,* Penguin Teen
Next Book to Watch For: *Break This House,* Penguin Teen (May 24, 2022)
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *The Stars & the Blackness Between Them* by Junauda Petrus
Harshita Jerath
she/her/hers | harshitajerath.com | @hjerath | @harshitajerath


Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): The Leaping Laddoo
Next Book to Watch For: Cooler Than Lemonade comes out in March 2023
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Too Small Tola by Atinuke

Kevin Johnson
he/him/his | www.captaincreate.com | Youtube @CaptainCreate | @Captain_Create

Kevin Johnson is author of the forthcoming picture book, Cape (Roaring Brook Press, Feb 2023). The adopted son of two loving educators, Kevin fell in love with storytelling at an early age. This led him to study screenwriting and filmmaking, receiving a Bachelors of Arts from Temple University. Kevin is a lover of movies, books, comics, music, and gadgets. While his birthplace, Philadelphia, will always remain home, Kevin loves to travel and find inspiration for his next tale. You can visit him online at www.captaincreate.com.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Debut book, Cape, comes out next year (February 2023) from Roaring Brook Press
Next Book to Watch For: Cape (Roaring Brook Press, February 2023)
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Stuntboy, In the Meantime - Jason Reynolds

Aya Khalil
she/her/hers | www.ayakhalil.com | @ayakhalilauthor | @ayawrites

Aya Khalil, M.Ed, is an award-winning author and freelance journalist. She holds a master’s degree in Education with a focus in teaching English as a second Language. Aya and her book have been featured in Oprah Daily, Teen Vogue, Yahoo!, Book Riot and USA Today. Her writing has been published in The Huffington Post, The Christian Science Monitor, Toledo Area Parent and many others. Her debut picture book The Arabic Quilt was published in February 2020 by Tilbury House & illustrated by Anait Semirdzhyan and has won numerous awards and honors. Her next upcoming picture book, The Night Before Eid, will be published in 2023 by Little, Brown/ Christy Ottaviano, about three generations of Egyptian-Americans bonding over a special Eid treat. It will be illustrated by Rashin Kheiriyeh. Her third book, The Banned Books Bake Sale: A Protest Story is slated to be released in 2023. Aya is represented by Brent Taylor of Triada US Agency.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): The Arabic Quilt: An Immigrant Story
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow

Adib Khorram
he/him/his | adibkhorram.com | @adibkhorram | Tiktok: @adib.khorram

Adib Khorram is the queer Iranian-American author of numerous award-winning books for young readers, including Darius The Great Is Not Okay, Darius The Great Deserves Better, Seven Special Somethings, and Kiss & Tell.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Kiss & Tell

Sarah Kim Choi
she/her/hers | sarahkchoi.com

Born and raised in Texas by first-generation Korean immigrants, Sarah has lived and worked all over the U.S. as a cause marketing and communications consultant and freelance writer. Currently, she helps companies and organizations develop their authentic brand voice and facilitates the practice of circle storytelling to build compassion and equity. Sarah is also an advisory board member of Inprint Houston, a premier nonprofit supporting the excellence and diversity of literary arts in the U.S. Sarah hopes her books for children will shine a joyful light on the humanity and innate worthiness of every child. She lives with her family in Atlanta.

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: The Camping Trip by Jennifer K. Mann
Cheryl Klein  Editorial Director, Lee & Low Books
she/her/hers  |  cherylklein.com  |  @chavelaque

Cheryl Klein is endlessly fascinated by the power and possibilities of picture books (see: Ten Blocks to the Big Wok by Ying-Hwa Hu; Seven Golden Rings by Rajani LaRocca, illustrated by Archana Sreenivasan; When Aidan Become a Brother by Kyle Lukoff, illustrated by Kaylani Juanita . . .) and edits select older titles as well. She is the author of The Magic Words: Writing Great Books for Children and Young Adults and four picture books, most recently Hamsters Make Terrible Roommates, illustrated by Abhi Alwar. She can be found online at www.cherylklein.com and as @chavelaque.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): I edited Boys Of The Beast by Monica Zepeda.

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Anything illustrated by Archana Sreenivasan is a wonder.

» Seeking: Picture book manuscript, Picture book dummies, Nonfiction, Rhyming text/Poetry, Illustration portfolios

» To submit: Please e-mail a cover letter plus a full picture book manuscript or ten pages of a longer project (ideally pasted into the e-mail, not as attachments) to CBKEdit@gmail.com. Put #KWELI22 in the subject line.

London Ladd
londonladd.com  |  @london.ladd

London Ladd, currently pursuing an MFA in Illustration at Syracuse University, uses a mixed media approach to bring his diverse subjects to life. His goal is to open a visual arts community center for lower-income families so they can create their own art. London lives in Syracuse, New York.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): American Anthem

Next Book to Watch For: Black Gold, October 2022

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Shelia Moses

Rajani LaRocca
she/her/hers  |  www.RajaniLaRocca.com  |  @rajanilarocca

Rajani LaRocca was born in India, raised in Kentucky, and now lives in the Boston area, where she practices medicine and writes award-winning books for young readers. She’s always been an omnivorous reader, and now she is an omnivorous writer of fiction and nonfiction, novels and picture books, prose and poetry. She finds inspiration in her family, her childhood, the natural world, math, science, and just about everywhere she looks. Learn more about Rajani and her books at www.RajaniLaRocca.com. She also cohosts the STEM Women in KidLit Podcast.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): I’ll Go and Come Back, Candlewick, March 29, 2022

Next Book to Watch For: Switch (MG), Quill Tree Books/HarperCollins, 2023

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: A Comb of Wishes by Lisa Stringfellow - I can’t wait to read it!

Minh Lê
he/him/his  |  minhlebooks.com  |  @bottomshelfbks

Minh Lê is the author of Drawn Together (winner of the 2019 Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature), Lift (an Eisner Award-nominee), Green Lantern: Legacy, and others. He has several forthcoming projects including The Blur (a new picture book with Dan Santat) and A Lotus for You, the authorized picture book biography of the world-renowned Zen Buddhist monk and Nobel Peace Prize nominee, Thích Nhất Hạnh. In addition to writing books, Minh serves on the board of We Need Diverse Books and has written for a number of national publications, including NPR, The Huffington Post, and the New York Times.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Lift

Next Book to Watch For: The Blur (May 3, 2022)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Let Me Fix You a Plate by Elizabeth Lilly

Emeline Lee
she/her/hers  |  www.emelinelee.com  |  TikTok: @EmelineLeeBooks

Emeline Lee is the author of the forthcoming children’s picture book, Bonnie’s Rocket, illustrated by Alina Chau and published by Lee & Low Books. The STEM-friendly story was inspired by her grandfather, who was an engineer for Apollo 11. She holds a degree from Columbia University, where she studied English Literature and Sustainable Development, and she currently works in the renewable energy sector. During her free time, she enjoys quiet hikes where she can see the stars at night.

Next Book to Watch For: Bonnie’s Rocket by Emeline Lee and illustrated by Alina Chau with Lee & Low Books out June 2022

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Jasmine Warga
Kristen R. Lee
she/her/hers | www.kristenleebooks.com | @kristenleebooks

Kristen R. Lee is a native of Memphis, Tennessee. After graduating from college, she began to write her experiences attending a predominantly white institution, which led to the first draft of Required Reading for the Disenfranchised Freshman. She's worked as a mentor for foster youth and has interned in a school setting, where she counseled middle-school-aged children. Writing stories that reflect often-unheard voices is what she strives to do.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Required Reading for the Disenfranchised Freshman
Next Book to Watch For: Sun Keep Rising
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Laila Sabreen

Arthur A. Levine President, Editor-in-Chief, Levine Querido
he/him/his | www.levinequerido.com | @arthuralevine1

Arthur A. Levine is the President and Editor-in-chief of Levine Querido, an independent publisher founded in 2019. Among the books he’s edited are Printz medalist Daniel Nayeri’s Everything Sad is Untrue, Sundee Frazier’s Mighty inside, Cat Min’s Shy Willow and Young Vo’s Gibberish. Among the lenses through which he sees the world are those of a Gay, Jewish person with disabilities.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Gibberish (Young Vo / Picture Book)
Next Book to Watch For: The Dove in the Belly by Jim Grimsely (Novel, June)
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: My Brother Was an Aztec by Nathalie Diaz

Tiff Liao Executive Editor, Zando
she/her/hers | zandoprojects.com/about/ | @tiff_liao

Tiffany Liao leads Zando’s Young Readers initiative. Prior to joining Zando, Tiffany worked at Henry Holt Books for Young Readers, where she edited the #1 New York Times bestsellers Firekeeper’s Daughter by Angeline Boulley, winner of the Morris and the Printz Awards, Children of Blood and Bone by Tomi Adeyemi, and its sequel Children of Virtue and Vengeance. She’s had the honor and joy of working with authors such as Lily Anderson, Dhonielle Clayton, Maurene Goo, Lesley Livingston, Goldy Moldavsky, Tochi Onyebuchi, Margaret Owen, Jenn Reese, and “Queer Eye” star Karamo Brown.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Scout’s Honor by Lily Anderson (Henry Holt/Macmillan)
Next Book to Watch For: Every Bird A Prince by Jenn Reese (Henry Holt/Macmillan)
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: The Chosen One by Echo Brown

Alvina Ling VP and Editor-in-Chief, Little, Brown Books for Young Readers
she/her/hers | bloomabilities.blogspot.com/ | @planetavlin | @alvinaling

Alvina Ling is VP and Editor-in-Chief at Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (a division of Hachette Book Group) where she has worked since 1999. She edits children’s books for all ages, including A Big Mooncake for Little Star and Where the Mountain Meets the Moon by Grace Lin, Dave the Potterer by Laban Carrick Hill and illustrated by Bryan Collier, The Land of Stories series by Chris Colfer, The Wild Robot by Peter Brown, Ghost Boys by Jewell Parker Rhodes, Troublemaker by John Cho, The Astonishing Color of After by Emily X.R. Pan, and The Cruel Prince by Holly Black. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband and two cats.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Troublemaker by John Cho, Mirror Girls by Kelly McWilliams, Amira & Hamza by Samira Ahmed
Next Book to Watch For: An Arrow To The Moon by Emily X.R. Pan
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: More Than Just A Pretty Face by Syed Masood
Darcie Little Badger  
**she/her/hers | darcielittlebadger.wordpress.com/about/ | @dr.littlebadger | TikTok: @dr.littlebadger**

Darcie Little Badger is a Lipan Apache writer with a PhD in oceanography. Her critically acclaimed debut novel, *Elatsoe*, was featured in *Time Magazine* as one of the best 100 fantasy books of all time. *Elatsoe* also won the Locus award for Best First Novel and is a Nebula, Ignyte, and Lodestar finalist. Her second fantasy novel, *A Snake Falls to Earth*, received a Newbery Honor and is on the National Book Awards longlist. Darcie is married to a veterinarian named Taran.

**Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): A Snake Falls to Earth**  
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Cynthia Leitich Smith, *Sisters of the Neversea*

---

Amina Luqman-Dawson  
**she/her/hers | www.aminaluqman-dawson.com | @aminaluqman**

Amina Luqman-Dawson loves using writing to tell stories and to build an understanding of race, culture and community. Her published writing includes op-eds in newspapers, magazine articles, travel writing and book reviews. She's authored the pictorial history book *Images of America: African Americans of Petersburg* (Arcadia Publishing). She’s worked as a policy professional, researcher and consultant on issues of education and criminal justice. She has a BA in Political Science from Vassar College and a Master of Public Policy from UC Berkeley. She’s a proud mother of a 13-year-old son. She, her husband and son reside in Arlington, VA. *Freewater* is her debut novel.

**Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Freewater, Little Brown Books for Young Readers, Release: February 1, 2022**  
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Kaija Langley, author of *When Langston Dances* (2021)

---

Eva Lynch-Comer  
**Assistant Editor, HarperCollins Children’s Books | she/her/hers | @evalynchcomer**

Eva Lynch-Comer is an assistant editor at HarperCollins Children’s Books. Before working at Harper, Eva interned at the Jennifer De Chiara Literary Agency and Hannigan Getzler Literary Agency. Eva is particularly drawn to young adult and middle grade, novels in verse, fantasy/speculative fiction, and stories centering marginalized identities. She has a Bachelor’s degree in Creative Writing from Hamilton College. When she’s not fully immersed in the book world, you can find Eva singing, journaling, swimming, writing poetry, or walking her dog Osito.

**Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Fros, Waves, Fades, and Braid*s by Sean Qualls. I edited this book with Executive Editor Alyson Day at HarperCollins Children’s Books.**  
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *What Is Not Yours Is Not Yours* by Helen Oyeyemi  
» Seeking: Middle-grade, Young adult, Realistic contemporary, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Romance, Historical  
» To submit: Please put Kweli Conference in the subject line and email me your children’s book submissions at the following email: eva.lynch-comer@harpercollins.com. Please include a summary and a bio.

---

Katie Madison  
**she/her/hers | www.kvmadison.com | @kvmad**

Katie is a Brooklyn based composer, director, producer, writer and vocalist. She is an inaugural member of Hi-ARTS’ Artspace Exchange Program. With a New York City Artist Corps Grant Katie produced, directed and performed in a concert of her work at the historic Weeksville Heritage Center. A Critical Breaks Resident with Hi-Arts in April 2021 and a 2021 Jonathan Larson Award finalist, Katie’s work has been commissioned by Lincoln Center, the University of Michigan’s Musical Theatre Department, New York Stage and Film, Crossroads Theatre Company, The Civilians, Milwaukee Skylight Theatre, The Tank, En Garde Arts and The Cowles Center.

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Liner Notes for the Revolution* by Daphne A. Brooks

---

Kekla Magoon  
**she/her/hers | keklamagoon.com | @KeklaMagoon**

Kekla Magoon is the award-winning author of many novels and nonfiction books for young readers, including *The Season Of Styx Malone, How It Went Down*, and *Revolution In Our Time: The Black Panther Party’s Promise To The People*, which was a Michael L. Printz Honor winner and National Book Award Finalist. Kekla has also received four Coretta Scott King Honors, two Walter Award Honors, the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, and an NAACP Image Award. She holds an MFA in Writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts, where she now teaches.

**Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Revolution In Our Time: The Black Panther Party’s Promise to the People**  
Next Book to Watch For: *Chester Keene Cracks the Code* (July 2022)  
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Sisters of the Neversea* by Cynthia Leitich Smith

---
Meghan Maria McCullough  Associate Editor, Levine Querido  
**she/her/hers | levinequerido.com | @meghanmariamcc**

Meghan Maria McCullough is an Associate Editor at Levine Querido. Previously, she was an Editorial Assistant at Arthur A. Levine Books, an imprint of Scholastic. Prior to joining Scholastic, she worked in marketing at Penguin Random House. She holds an MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults from The New School.

**Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Ironhead, or, Once A Young Lady by Jean-Claude van Rijckeghem, translated by Kristen Gehrman**

Next Book to Watch For: *The Lost Ryū* by Emi Watanabe Cohen, out 6/7/22

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Fat Chance, Charlie Vega* by Crystal Maldonado

» Seeking: Middle-grade, Young adult, Graphic novels, Illustration portfolios

» To submit: Please send your query letter and the first three chapters of your work to me at meghanmaria@levinequerido.com with “Kweli 2022” in the subject line.

---

Madelyn McZeal  Editorial Assistant, Levine Querido  
any/all pronouns | levinequerido.com | @MadelynMcZeal

Madelyn McZeal is an Editorial Assistant at Levine Querido. She graduated from Columbia University with a BA in Creative Writing. She has a terrible sense of direction, and gets lost in books quite easily. When she grows up, she wants to be Lemony Snicket.

**Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Aviva vs the Dybbuk* by Mari Lowe (editorial assistant on this book)**

Next Book to Watch For: *Night* by Katherine Jambe (co-edited with Irene Vázquez) Fall 23

Seeking: Picture book manuscript, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Graphic novels

---

Sydnee Monday  Associate Editor, Penguin Young Readers  
**she/they | www.penguin.com/kokila-books-overview/ | @sydneemonday**

Sydnee Monday has assisted on bestselling and critically acclaimed titles such as *Hair Love* by Matthew A. Cherry and Vashti Harrison, *Patron Saints of Nothing* by Randy Ribay, *The Legend of Auntie Po* by Shing Yin Khor, and *Maya and the Robot* by Eve L. Ewing. They’ve edited titles such as *The Cot in the Living Room* by Hilda Eunice Burgos and Gaby D’Alessandro, *A Blue Kind of Day* by Rachel Tomlinson and Tori-Jay Mordey, and *Sam’s Super Seats* by Keah Brown and Sharee Miller. A graduate of Howard University, they mentor NYC students with the Governor’s Committee on Scholastic Achievement.

**Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *A Blue Kind Of Day***

Next Book to Watch For: *Sam’s Super Seats*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Flyy Girls* series by Ashley Woodfolk, edited by Anu Ohioma

» To submit: See Kokila’s unagented submissions window. Not currently accepting individual submissions at this time.

---

Magaly Morales  
**she/her/hers | yuyimorales.com | @yuyimorales**

Yuyi Morales is an author/illustrator whose books have won the Pura Belpré Award, the Christopher Award, and the Jane Addams Award. She lives in Mexico. Her books include *Bright Star, Dreamers, Just In Case, Viva Frida,* and *Little Night/Nochecita*.

**Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Bright Star***

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Raúl the Third*

---

Magaly Morales  
**she/her/hers | @magymg | /magaly.m.garcia**

Magaly Morales is the illustrator of Pura’s *Cuentos: How Pura Belpré Reshaped Libraries with Her Stories* by Annette Bay Pimentel. The book garnered multiple starred reviews (*Kirkus, Booklist, and Publishers’ Weekly*) and *Kirkus* named it a best book of the year. It also earned the 2021 Goddard Riverside CBC Youth Prize for Social Justice. Other projects include *What Can You Do with a Paleta?*, a Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children’s Book Award winner, as well as the picture books *Chavela and the Magic Bubble* and *A Piñata in a Pine Tree*. She was born in Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico.

**Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Pura’s Cuentos: How Pura Belpre Reshaped Libraries with Her Stories** by Annette Bay Pimentel

Next Book to Watch For: *The Courage of the Little Hummingbird* by Leah Henderson, 2023 release
Susan Muaddi Darraj
she/her/hers | www.SusanMuaddiDarraj.com | @susandarraj
Susan Muaddi Darraj is the author of the Farah Rocks (Capstone Books) series, the first chapter book series to feature a Palestinian American character. She lives in Baltimore, where she teaches fiction writing at the Johns Hopkins University. Susan is a recipient of many awards, including the American Book Award, the Arab American Book Award, and a Ford Fellowship for her books.
Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Farah Rocks Florida (August 2021)
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Lisa Stringfellow, A Comb of Wishes

Marilyn Nelson
she/her/hers
Marilyn Nelson is the author or translator of seventeen poetry books and the memoir How I Discovered Poetry. She is also the author of The Fields Of Praise: New And Selected Poems, which won the 1998 Poets’ Prize, Carver: A Life In Poems, which won the 2001 Boston Globe/Hornbook Award and the Flora Stiegltz Straus Award, and Fortune’s Bones, which was a Coretta Scott King Honor Book and won the Lion and the Unicorn Award for Excellence in North American Poetry. She is also the author of the biography Augusta Savage: The Shape of a Sculptor’s Life (2022). Nelson’s honors include two NEA creative writing fellowships, the 1990 Connecticut Arts Award, a Fulbright Teaching Fellowship, a fellowship from the J.S. Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and the Frost Medal. She was the Poet Laureate of the State of Connecticut from 2001-2006.
Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Augusta Savage: The Shape of a Sculptor’s Life

Lissette J. Norman
she/her/hers | www.lissettenorman.com | @lissettejnorman
Lissette J. Norman is the children’s book author of My Feet Are Laughing and Platanos Go With Everything. She is also co-author of the books, On The Line: The First African-American Rockette (w/ Jennifer Jones) and Until Someone Listens (w/ Estela Juarez). Lissette was awarded the New York Foundation for the Arts - 2018 Artist Fellowship in Fiction, the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund Grant, and the Hedgebrook and Martha’s Vineyard writer’s residencies. She was also an Author-in-Residence for the BookUpNYC program through the National Book Foundation. Lissette received her BA in English at SUNY-Binghamton and currently lives in New York City.
Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): My Feet Are Laughing (FSG)
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Loyla’s Happiness by Mariahadessa Ekere Tallie & Illus. by Ashleigh Corrin

Daniel J. O’Brien
he/him/his | www.DanielOStudios.com | @danielostudios
Daniel O’Brien is a Trinidadian born author, illustrator, and all around storyteller. Residing in New York with his amazing partner Ashleigh and his loyal dog, Obbies, Daniel holds a BFA in Illustration from The School of Visual Arts. His training coupled with his love of science, folklore, and nature inspires Daniel to create otherworldly illustrations. He is enthusiastic about contributing to the telling of Caribbean stories and is honored to be a part of the Caribbean Reads community. Daniel’s ultimate goal is to help children in the Caribbean and of Caribbean descent see themselves in the books they read.
Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): The Carnival Prince (Hardcover edition)
Next Book to Watch For: Dupies, Droids and Dingolay! (2022)
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Nola Hopkinson

Molly O’Neill  Literary Agent, Root Literary
she/her/hers | mollyoneillbooks.com; rootliterary.com | @molly_oneill | @mollyoneillbooks
Molly O’Neill is an agent with Root Literary. She loves the creative process and early-stage project development, is invigorated by business strategy and entrepreneurial thinking, and is fascinated by the intersections of creativity, commerce, storytelling, innovation, and community. Over the course of nearly two decades in publishing, she has worked as an editor, a marketing expert, and a start-up executive; all of these skills now power her expertise as a literary agent of award-winning and bestselling authors, illustrators, and graphic novelists.
Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Kiss & Tell by Adib Khorram, Dial/Penguin (YA) ; This Is A School, by John Schu and Veronica Miller Jamison, Candlewick (PB)
Next Book to Watch For: Perfectly Imperfect Mira by Faith Pray, Little Brown (PB)
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Wishes by Mrùnh Thj Vân, illustrated by Victo Ngai

» Seeking: Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Graphic novels, Illustration portfolios
» To submit: Please follow the guidelines on my website (mollyoneillbooks.com/submissions) & mention Kweli attendance in the subject line and/or your query.

Laura Obuobi
she/her/hers | lauraobuobi.com | @lauraobuobi

Laura was born and raised in Accra, Ghana, but has been living in the United States since 2003. She is fascinated by pre-colonial West African history and how it connects with the Black diaspora and Black history. Laura loves to explore these themes, elements, and cultural connections in her stories. Before she was a children’s author, Laura was a preschool teacher. Her time in the classroom birthed the desire to write for children. Laura is a graduate of the Writing for Children and Young Adults program at Vermont College of Fine Arts. Her debut picture book, Black Gold, illustrated by London Ladd releases in Fall 2022.

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Measuring Up. By Lily LaMotte & Ann Xu (Middle Grade Graphic Novel)

Nnedi Okorafor
she/her/hers | nnedi.com | @nnedi

Nnedi Okorafor is an international, award-winning novelist of African-based science fiction, fantasy and magical realism for both children and adults. She’s the author of the Black Panther comics from Marvel Comics, with a movie adaptation that became a world-wide sensation! She’s authored a spinoff graphic novel, Wakanda Forever, with a movie to follow. Her other comics include Antar: the Black Knight (IDW/Mirage Films), and LaGuardia. Author George R.R. Martin (Game of Thrones) and HBO are turning Nnedi’s adult novel, Who Fears Death, into a TV series. The Book of Phoenix (prequel to Who Fears Death) was heralded by the NY Times as a “triumph”.

Born in the United States to two Nigerian immigrant parents, Nnedi is known for weaving African culture and folklore into creative, evocative settings with memorable characters. She’s considered by many to be the successor to Ursula LeGuin for her literary quality fantasy and sci-fi creations. She’s a multi NYTimes bestselling author, and her many literary awards include a Nebula and Hugo Award. She has a passionate YA following for her Binti series, and the Akata Witch books. Her children’s book Chicken in the Kitchen won an Africana Book Award. Akata Witch 2: Akata Warrior, and Binti 2: Home, are now out in paperback. She holds a PhD in English.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Akata Woman

Nasugraq Rainey Hopson

She is a tribally enrolled Inupiaq born in Barrow Alaska (now known as Utqiagvik), and raised in Point Hope Alaska where her mother is from. She has two brothers, and one sister, all younger siblings. She is married and they are raising their amazing daughters in Anaktuvuk Pass, Alaska where her husband is originally from. It’s a very tiny, very beautiful Native village in the remote Brooks Range. They live a predominantly subsistence life, which means they harvest animals and plants from the wild of the arctic for a good portion of our food. They do as much as they can to preserve traditional Inupiaq values and knowledge this way. Her forthcoming novel is called Eagle Drum.

Julian Randall
He/They (interchangeable) | JulianDavidRandall.com | @JulianthePoet

Julian Randall is a Living Queer Black poet from Chicago. He is the author of the middle grade novel Pilar Ramirez And The Escape from Zafa (Holt, Winter 2022). His other writing has been anthologized in Wild Tongues Can’t Be Tamed: 15 Voices from the Latinx Diaspora (Flatiron, 2021) and Black Boy Joy (Delacorte, 2021), a #1 New York Times Best Seller! He can be found on Twitter and Instagram at @JulianThePoet and on his website JulianDavidRandall.com

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Pilar Ramirez and the Escape from Zafa (March 1st, 2022; Holt Books for Young Readers)

Next Book to Watch For: Pilar Ramirez and the Curse of San Zenon (2023, Date TBA)
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Lorraine Avila, The Making of Yolanda La Bruja will be a game changer
Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich
she/her/hers | olugbemisolabooks.com | @olugbemisolarhudayperkovich

Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich is the author of several children’s books, including Operation Sisterhood, It Doesn’t Take A Genius, Two Naomis, with Audrey Vernick, which was nominated for an NAACP Image Award, 8th Grade Superzero, Above and Beyond: NASA’s Journey to Tomorrow, Saving Earth: Climate Change and the Fight for Our Future, Someday Is Now: Clara Luper and the 1958 Oklahoma City Sit-Ins, easy readers, and more. She is a member of the Brown Bookshelf, and editor of the WNDB anthology The Hero Next Door. Olugbemisola is a Jamaican Nigerian New Yorker who lives with her family in NYC where she writes, makes things, and needs to get more sleep.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Operation Sisterhood
Next Book to Watch For: Saving Earth, April 5, 2022
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Tiara’s Hat Parade by Kelly Starling Lyons

Andrea L. Rogers
she/her/hers | andrealrogers.com/ | @andrealrogers

Andrea L. Rogers is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation. She grew up in Tulsa, Oklahoma. She graduated with an MFA from IAIA. Her stories have appeared in several literary journals. In 2020, Capstone published Mary and the Trail of Tears. Her work has also appeared in You Too? 25 Voices Share Their #MeToo Stories from Inkyard Press, Ancestor Approved: Intertribal Stories for Kids from Heartdrum, and in the anthology Allies by DK. Her picture book called, When We Gather, is forthcoming from Heartdrum. Man Made Monsters, a book of YA Horror, will be released by Levine Querido in Fall 2022.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Mary and the Trail of Tears
Next Book to Watch For: Man Made Monsters September 2022 from Levine Querido
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Unspeakable by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Floyd Cooper

Kim Rogers
she/her/hers | kimrogerswriter.com | @kimrogerswriter

Kim Rogers’s debut picture book, Just Like Grandma, illustrated by Julie Flett, is slated for winter 2023. A Letter for Bob, illustrated by Jonathan Nelson, is planned for summer 2023, and I Am Osage, is due out in winter 2024, illustrated by Bobby Von Martin, all with HarperCollins/Heartdrum. She is a contributor to Ancestor Approved (HarperCollins/Heartdrum, 2021). The cover was inspired by Jessie, the protagonist in her short story, “Flying Together.” Kim is an enrolled member of Wichita and Affiliated Tribes and the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. She lives with her family on her tribe’s ancestral homelands in Oklahoma.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Ancestor Approved - poem, “What is a Powwow?” and short story, “Flying Together”
Next Book to Watch For: Just Like Grandma - winter 2023
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Me (Moth) by Amber McBride

Rhonda Roumani
she/her/hers | @rroumani

Rhonda Roumani is a Syrian-American journalist who has written about Islam, the Arab world and Muslim-American issues for more than two decades. Currently, she is a Contributing Fellow at the Center for Religion and Civic Culture at USC, and a Journalism Fellow for their Spiritual Exemplar Project. She is also a Highlights Muslim Storytellers Fellow. She is represented by Brent Taylor of TriadaUS. Her first middle grade novel about a Syrian graffiti artist is scheduled to be released in Fall of 2023 with Sterling; and her first picture book, Umm Kulthum, Star of the East, will be released in Fall 2023 with Interlink Publishing.

Next Book to Watch For: Tagging Freedom, Fall 2023
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: S.K. Ali, Saints and Misfits

Isabel Roxas
she/her/hers | studioroxas.com | @studioroxas

Isabel Roxas is the author and illustrator of The Adventures of Team Pom: Squid Happens. The first book in a series, it features three questing kids, a lonely giant squid, dramatic synchronized swimming routines, nefarious rats in bowler hats, mayhem and pigeons. She was born in Manila, Philippines, was raised on luscious mangoes, old wives’ tales, and monsoon moons. Isabel has illustrated several books for young readers, including Our Skin: A First Conversation about Race by Megan Madison and Jessica Ralli, Let Me Finish! by Minh Lê (named an NPR Best Book of 2016) and Day at the Market by May Tobias-Papa (2010 winner of the Philippine National Book Award)

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): The Adventures of Team Pom: Squid Happens
Next Book to Watch For: Yes! No! (February 1,2022)
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: The Big Bath House by Ryo McCleary and illustrated by Gracey Zhang
Aida Salazar
she/her/hers | www.AidaSalazar.com | @aida_writes

Aida Salazar is an award-winning author, arts activist, and translator whose writings explore issues of identity and social justice. She is the author of the critically acclaimed and multiple award-winning middle grade verse novels The Moon Within and Land Of The Cranes; and the picture book, In The Spirit Of A Dream. Her forthcoming books include the historical fiction novel, A Seed In The Sun; the bio picture book, Jovita Wore Pants: The Story Of A Mexican Freedom Fighter; and the menstruation anthology Calling The Moon. She lives with her family of artists in a teal house in Oakland, CA.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): In The Spirit Of A Dream: 13 Stories Of American Immigrants Of Color
Next Book to Watch For: A Seed In The Sun - October 2022 - Dial Books for Young Readers
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Padma Venkatraman

Stefanie Sanchez von Borstel Co-Founder and Literary Agent, Full Circle Literary
she/her/hers | Fullcircileterary.com | 🐦 @fullcirclelit

Stefanie Sanchez von Borstel is co-founder of Full Circle Literary, a literary agency with a focus on discovering, developing, and championing underrepresented creators of books and media. Some of the creators Stefanie represents include Monica Brown, Carmen Tafolla, Diana López, Celia C. Pérez, Jasmine Mendez, David Bowles, Adriana M. Garcia, Juana Martinez-Neal and Rafael López, to name a few. She is a board member of LatinxInPublishing. A proud Tejana from San Antonio, Stefanie is now based in southern California. Follow her @fullcirclelit

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Tumble by Celia C. Perez (Kokila)
Next Book to Watch For: The Turquoise Room by Monica Brown, illustrated by Adriana M. Garcia (Lee & Low, coming September 27, 2022)
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Rebecca Balcarcel
  » Seeking: Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Graphic novels, Illustration portfolios
  » To submit: Open to submissions in the following categories only: illustrators/author-illustrators, graphic novels, middle grade fiction/nonfiction via QueryManager or visit website www.fullcircileterary.com

Shirin Shamsi
she/her/hers | www.ShirinShamsi.com | @ShirinsBooks

Shirin’s family left India during the Partition. Having lived on three continents, she views herself as a global citizen and now spends her time sharing stories with children of the world. Shirin and her husband have raised six children - three human and three feline - and reside in the suburbs of Chicago.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Zahra’s Blessing: A Ramadan Story (Barefoot Books, March 7th 2022)
Next Book to Watch For: The Moon From Dehradun (Atheneum)
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Unbelonging by Gayatri Sethi

Sheetal Sheth
she/her/hers | www.sheetalsheth.com | 🏸 @beneaththesheetz | 🌻 @sheetalsheth | 🌿/OfficialSheetalSheth

Sheetal Sheth is an acclaimed actress/producer, author, and activist. She has starred in over 20 feature films and many TV shows and has earned a loyal, international following. Sheetal has become a favorite in the independent film world, having won five best actress awards on the festival circuit. Sheth began her career at a time when few South Asians were making their living as actors. Despite being told she’d have to change her name to work, her successful career has trail-blazed paths for other women of color across media. She has delivered talks and keynotes at festivals and charity galas and has had op-eds published on CNN, The Daily Beast, and Thrive Global. She is one of the founders of the non profit, 1001 Diverse Books, she served in President Clinton’s AmeriCorps and is currently on the advisory board of Equality Now. She is the author of the popular and award winning Anjali children’s book series, the first and only in this age group featuring an Indian American girl hero.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Bravo Anjali
Next Book to Watch For: Making Happy, Fall 2022 and Anjali Can, Fall 2022
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Roda Ahmed
Krystal A. Sital
she/her/hers | @krystalsital

Krystal A. Sital is the author of the critically acclaimed memoir *Secrets We Kept: Three Women of Trinidad* which was a finalist for the PEN America Emerging Writers Award. Her essays have been anthologized in *A Map Is Only One Story: Twenty Writers on Immigration, Family, and the Meaning of Home and Fury: Women’s Lives Experiences in the Trump Era*. Krystal’s work has been featured in *The New York Times*, *ELLE*, *Today’s Parent*, *Salon*, *Catapult*, *LitHub*, and elsewhere. She currently teaches in Sierra Nevada University’s MFA program.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Secrets We Kept: Three Women of Trinidad*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Pachinko* by Min Jin Lee

---

Traci Sorell
she/her/hers | www.tracisorell.com | @tracisorell

Traci Sorell writes award-winning fiction and nonfiction works for young people. Born and raised in northeastern Oklahoma, she is an enrolled citizen of the Cherokee Nation and lives on her tribe’s reservation. Her work focuses on combating the erasure and invisibility of Native Nations and their citizens while centering their humanity, sovereignty, histories, cultures and languages in trade published literature for young people. Traci’s nonfiction books include *We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga* (2018); *Classified: The Secret Career of Mary Golda Ross, Cherokee Aerospace Engineer* (2021); and, *We Are Still Here: Native American Truths Everyone Should Know* (2021).

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Powwow Day* (fiction PB, Feb. 8, Charlesbridge)

Next Book to Watch For: *Wilma Mankiller - She Persisted* chapter book series (nonfiction, Oct. 4, Philomel)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *The Power of Style* by Christian Allaire ( NF YA, 2021, Annick Press)

---

Elizabeth Stranahan  
Associate Editor, Penguin Random House
she/her/hers | www.manuscriptwishlist.com/mswl-post/elizabeth-stranahan/ | @estranahan

Elizabeth Stranahan is an Associate Editor at Crown Books for Young Readers (PRH) where she acquires young adult and middle-grade fiction that is character driven, filled with banter, and challenges readers to life’s big questions. At Crown, she has worked with Elle McNicoll whose debut *A Kind of Spark* is a Schneider Award Honor and Waterstones Children’s Book Prize Winner, YA thriller writer Alexa Donne (*The Ivies*), and the Smithsonian Latino Center among others. When not tending to her email, Elizabeth can be found catching up on the latest gymnastics competition, quilting, and rewatching *Derry Girls*—occasionally at the same time.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *A Kind of Spark* by Elle McNicoll

Next Book to Watch For: *Pretty Dead Queens* by Alexa Donne (OSD: 10/4/22)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Verona Comics* by Jennifer Dugan

» Seeking: Middle-grade, Young adult

» To submit: Open to agented submissions

---

Lisa Stringfellow
she/her/hers | lisastringfellow.com | @EngageReaders

Lisa Stringfellow writes middle grade fiction and has a not-so-secret fondness for fantasy with a dark twist. Her debut fantasy *A Comb of Wishes* will be published on February 8, 2022 by HarperCollins/Quill Tree Books. It was selected as an ABA Indies Introduce title for Winter/Spring 2022 and Lisa received the inaugural Kweli Color of Children’s Literature Manuscript Award in 2019 for the novel manuscript. Her work often reflects her West Indian and Black southern heritage. Lisa is a middle school teacher and lives in Boston, Massachusetts, with her children and two bossy cats.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *A Comb of Wishes* (2/8/22), HarperCollins/Quill Tree Books

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Hana Hsu and the Ghost Crab Nation* by Sylvia Liu; Penguin Random House/Razorbill; Releases June 21, 2022

---

Brittany J. Thurman
she/her/hers | www.brittanythurman.com | @britjanee | @brittanyjthurman

Brittany J. Thurman is the author of *Fly*, illustrated by Anna Cunha, the forthcoming *Forever And Always*, and is co-author of *Fearless: Boulevard Of Dreams* by Mandy Gonzalez. Brittany holds an MFA in Dramatic Writing from Carnegie Mellon University. She is a graduate of Kingston University, London, England, where she studied theater. Brittany is a former children’s specialist and museum educator, where she advocated for representation in early literacy. Brittany lives in Louisville, Kentucky, where she holds tight to her elders, her family, and her childhood home.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Fly* by Brittany J. Thurman, Illustrated by Anna Cunha

Next Book to Watch For: *Forever And Always* (Greenwillow/Harpercollins; 2024)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Yummy: The Last Days of a Southside Shorty* by G. Neri
Irene Vázquez   Editorial and Marketing Assistant, Levine Querido
she/her/hers | www.irenevazquez.com | @capaciousmood

Irene Vázquez is a Black Mexican American poet, journalist, and editor (and now burgeoning publicist) born and raised in Houston, Texas. Irene graduated from Yale with a BA in Ethnicity, Race, and Migration and English. Irene gravitates to voice-driven stories that are firmly rooted in a sense of place (whether real or imagined). Mostly Irene likes drinking coffee, impulse-buying books, and reminding people that the South’s got something to say.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Freedom! The Story of the Black Panther Party by Jetta Grace Martin, Waldo E. Martin, and Joshua Bloom

Next Book to Watch For: Arcadia by Willow Curry

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Who Put This Song On? by Morgan Parker

» Seeking: Middle-grade, Young adult, Realistic contemporary, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Mystery, Romance, Historical, Short stories

» To submit: Please put Kweli 2022 in the subject line. Include the query in the body of the email and attach up to two sample chapters. These can be directed to irene@levinequerido.com.

Elisabet Velasquez
she/her/hers | Elisabetvelasquez.com | ElisabetVelasquezPoetry

Elisabet Velasquez is a Boricua writer born in Bushwick, Brooklyn. Her work has been featured in Muzzle Magazine, Winter Tangerine, Latina Magazine, We Are Míti, Tidal, and more. Her debut novel, When We Make It was named a book to watch for by The New York Times. You can find it wherever books are sold.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): When We Make It

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Dhalma Lanos-Figueroa

Andrea Wang
she/her/hers | andreaywang.com | @AndreaYWang | @andreawhywang

Andrea Wang is an acclaimed author of children’s books. Her book Watercress was awarded the Caldecott Medal, a Newbery Honor, the Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature, and a Boston Globe-Horn Book Honor. Her other books, The Many Meanings of Meilan, Magic Ramen, and The Nian Monster have also received awards and starred reviews. Her work explores culture, creative thinking, and identity. She is also the author of seven nonfiction titles for the library and school market. Andrea holds an M.S. in Environmental Science and an M.F.A in Creative Writing for Young People. She lives in Denver with her family.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): The Many Meanings of Meilan (out 8/17/21); Watercress (out 3/31/21)

Next Book to Watch For: Luli and the Language of Tea, out 5/17/21

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: The Boys in the Back Row, by Mike Jung

Renée Watson
she/her/hers | www.reneewatson.net | @harlemportland | @reneewauthor

Renée Watson is a #1 New York Times bestselling author, educator, and activist. Her young adult novel, Piecing Me Together (Bloomsbury, 2017) received a Coretta Scott King Award and Newbery Honor. Her poetry and fiction often center around the experiences of black girls and women, and explores themes of home, identity, and the intersections of race, class, and gender. Renée served as Founder and Executive Director of I, Too, Arts Collective, a nonprofit committed to nurturing underrepresented voices in the creative arts, from 2016-2019. Renée grew up in Portland, Oregon, and splits her time between Portland and New York City.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): The 1619 Project: Born on the Water

Next Book to Watch For: Ways to Share Joy - A Ryan Hart Story

Cheryl Willis Hudson   Editorial Director, Just Us Books, Inc.
she/her/hers | justusbooks.com | cherylwillishudson.com | @cherylwillhudson | @cherylwillhudson

CHERYL WILLIS HUDSON is V.P. and editorial director of Just Us Books, Inc., an independent publishing company founded with her husband Wade that focuses on Black interest books for young people. Her books include AFRO-BETS ABC Book, Bright Eyes, Brown Skin, (co-authored with Bernette G. Ford); Hands Can, My Friend Maya Loves to Dance, Brave. Black. First. 50+ African American Women Who Changed the World and three anthologies which she co-edited with her husband Wade: We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices, The Talk: Conversations About Race, Love & Truth and RECOGNIZE! An Anthology Honoring and Amplifying Black Life.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Recognize! An Anthology Honoring and Amplifying Black Life (co-editor)

Next Book to Watch For: When I Hear Spirituals

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Renee Watson

» Seeking: Picture book manuscript, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade

Tweet what you learn and love! Tag @kwelijournal #Kweli22Virtual
Clarissa Wong  **Executive Editor, Scholastic**  
[Clariisa Wong's photo]

Clarissa Wong is an executive editor at Scholastic, where she acquires and edits picture books and select graphic novels. She worked on critically-acclaimed and award-winning books like *Eyes that Kiss in the Corners* by Joanna Ho and Dung Ho, *Where Are You From?* by Yamile Saied Méndez and Jaime Kim, and *Measuring Up* by Lily LaMotte and Ann Xu. Prior to joining Scholastic, she was a senior editor at HarperCollins. She is looking for joyous books that uplift voices from BIPOC and marginalized communities.

**Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited):** *Eyes that Speaks to the Stars* by Joanna Ho and Dung Ho

**Next Book to Watch For:** *Black Gold* by Laura Obuobi and London Ladd (Fall 2022)

**Diverse Book/Author to Recommend:** *Wishes* by Mụọ Thị Vân and Victo Ngai

» Seeking: Picture book manuscript, Picture book dummies

» To submit: Clarissa will accept picture book submissions up to 6 months after the conference. Please send submissions to cwong@scholastic.com with subject line: Kweli 2022 conference - submission.

Anne Wynter  
[Anne Wynter's photo]

Anne Wynter is a children’s book author and playwright. Her debut book—*Everybody in the Red Brick Building*, illustrated by Oge Mora—was a Kids' Indie Next pick, a Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection, a *Booklist* 2021 Editors’ Choice Book and a *Boston Globe Top Best Book* of 2021. Anne is also the author of two board books—*Hands On!* and *One Big Day*—both illustrated by Alea Marley and published in 2022. Her next book—*Nell Plants a Tree*, illustrated by Daniel Miyares—will be out in early 2023. Originally from Houston, Anne currently lives in Austin, TX with her family.

**Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited):** *One Big Day* and *Hands On!* both written by Anne Wynter and illustrated by Alea Marley; Published by Balzer + Bray/HarperCollins

**Next Book to Watch For:** *Nell Plants a Tree* written by Anne Wynter, illustrated by Daniel Miyares; It will be released in early 2023

**Diverse Book/Author to Recommend:** *What I Am* by Divya Srinivasan

[Phoebe Yeh's photo]

Phoebe Yeh is the Vice President and co-publisher at Crown Books for Young Readers/Random House. She worked with Joanna Cole and Bruce Degen on The Magic School Bus series and with Walter Dean Myers for twenty years. She has published the *New York Times* bestsellers, *Max & the Midknights* (Lincoln Peirce), *Dear Justyce* and debut novels *Dear Martin* and *Clean Getaway* (Nic Stone); *Recognize: An Anthology Honoring & Amplifying Black Life* edited by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson; *Defiant: Growing Up in the Jim Crow South* by Wade Hudson. Middle grade novels include *The Swag Is in the Socks* (Kelly J. Baptist) and upcoming: *The Natural Genius of Ants* (Betty Culy). YA novels include *Vinyl Moon* (Mahogany L Browne), *Radha & Jai's Recipe for Romance* (Nisha Sharma) and the upcoming Publishers Marketplace YA Buzz Book *Finding Jupiter* by debut novelist Kelis Rowe. Picture books include *The Rise (and Falls)* of Jackie Chan (Kristen Mai Giang/Alina Chau) and the upcoming Mae Finds a Way: *The True Story of Mae Reeves, Hat & History Maker* (Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich/Andrea Pippins) in collaboration with NMAAHC/Smithsonian Institution. Yeh is a recipient of the inaugural CBC Diversity Outstanding Achievement Award.

**Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited):** *Obie Is Man Enough* (Schuyler Bailar); *Operation Sisterhood* (Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich); *Required Reading for the Disenfranchised Freshman* (Kristen R. Lee); *Vinyl Moon* (Mahogany L Browne)

**Next Book to Watch For:** Marcus Makes It Big by Kevin Hart (May 3, 2022)

**Diverse Book/Author to Recommend:** *The Boys in the Back Row* (Mike Jung); Tochi Onyebuchi’s novels for young people

» Seeking: Picture book manuscript, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Nonfiction, Realistic contemporary, Graphic novels

» To submit: Attendees may submit appropriate submissions to me at Crown for six months after the conference. Please include KWELI 2022 in subject. I acquire primarily GN, MG, YA and select picture books and non-fiction.
Brian Young
he/him/his | www.brianlyoung.com | BYoungWrites | byoungwrites | BYoungWritres

Author and filmmaker, Brian Young is a graduate of both Yale University with a Bachelor’s in Film Studies and Columbia University with a Master’s in Creative Writing Fiction. An enrolled member of the Navajo Nation, he grew up on the Navajo Reservation but now currently lives in Brooklyn, New York. As an undergraduate, Brian won a fellowship with the prestigious Sundance Ford Foundation with one of his feature length scripts. He has worked on several short films including Tsídii Nááts’ílíid – Rainbow Bird and A Conversation on Race with Native Americans for the short documentary series produced by the New York Times.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Healer of the Water Monster
Next Book to Watch For: Heroes of the Water Monster, summer 2022
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Christine Day

Marietta B. Zacker  Co–Owner and Agent, Gallt and Zacker Literary Agency
she/her/hers | www.galltzacker.com | agentzacker

Marietta has worked with books, authors and illustrators throughout her career -- studying, creating, editing, marketing, teaching and selling. She supports independent bookselling, believes in libraries and takes pride in her work as a Latina in the world of publishing. Diversity in any story must be inherent and authentic, not trendy. She is thrilled to shine the spotlight on soulful, insightful, well-crafted, literary or commercial projects aimed at any age group from young adult to the youngest of readers. Books she is championing this spring include: Fly by Brittany Thurman, Because Claudette by Tracey Baptiste, Isla To Island by Alexis Castellanos, Saving Earth by Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Brittany Thurman’s Fly
Next Book to Watch For: Twelve Dinging Doorbells by Tameka Fryer Brown
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: The Magic In Changing Your Stars by Leah Henderson

Ibi Zoboi
she/her/hers | www.ibizoboi.net | ibizoboi

Ibi Zoboi was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and holds an MFA in writing for children and young adults from Vermont College of Fine Arts. Her YA novel American Street was a National Book Award finalist and her debut middle grade novel, My Life as an Ice Cream Sandwich, was a New York Times bestseller. She is the author of Pride, a contemporary YA remix of Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice, and editor of the anthology, Black Enough: Stories of Being Young & Black in America.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Okoye To The People, Star Child: A Biographical Constellation Of Octavia Estelle Butler
Next Book to Watch For: Nigeria Jones, Winter 2023
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Amber McBride
Kweli means “truth” in Swahili. Our Sing the Truth! Mentorship Program officially began on January 1st, 2022 with pre-conference events featuring authors Carole Boston Weatherford, Darcie Little Badger, and Ibi Zoboi, to name a few. Our program will continue through November when we offer our reading series with Kweli 2022 mentees.

Faculty will include:

Juana Martinez Neal
Laura Pegram
Aram Kim
Susan Muaddi Darraj
Lissette Norman
Tasha Spillet-Sumner
Arely Guzman
Abhi Alwar

...and MORE!

Visit kwelijournal.org for more information.
“I WRITE TO SHARE THE WORLD I SEE AND HOPE FOR—ONE WHERE EVERY CHILD CAN EXPERIENCE AND WITNESS POSSIBILITIES.”
—Leah Henderson, faculty member and proud Spalding MFA alum

SPALDING UNIVERSITY
NASLUND-MANN GRADUATE SCHOOL OF WRITING
Low residency programs

CROSS-GENRE EXPLORATION • INTERRELATEDNESS OF THE ARTS

RECENT VISITING WRITERS: KWAME ALEXANDER, LAMAR GILES, JACQUELINE WOODSON, PAM MUÑOZ RYAN, GENE LUEN YANG

APPLY BY FEBRUARY 1 FOR MAY OR JULY ENTRY, AUGUST 1 FOR NOVEMBER ENTRY

Spalding.edu/MFA
SchoolofWriting@Spalding.edu
The WINNER of the award receives a cash prize of $2,000 AND a Lee & Low Books publishing contract!
An HONOR Award winner will receive a cash prize of $1,000!
Deadline: August 1, 2022

For more information and FAQ, please visit leeandlow.com/writing-contests
Proudly representing Denene Millner, Cozbi A. Cabrera, Sili Recio, Karen Good-Marable, and open for all Kweli submissions.