

HAYSTACK
BOOK
FESTIVAL

A circular woodcut-style illustration of a haystack in a rural landscape. The haystack is the central focus, with a conical top and a textured surface. It is surrounded by rolling hills and fields, with a small building visible in the background. The entire scene is enclosed within a circular border.

2022

Haystack Book Festival brings together in unmoderated conversation writers and thinkers who have something to talk about. Past and upcoming talks are as various as Rosa Alcalá and MacArthur Award winner John Keene discussing the relation between their creative writing and their work as translators. Fenton Johnson and Margaret Gibson, the poet laureate of Connecticut, exploring the solitary world of poets and writers; Tyler Stoval and Manisha Sinha on freedom and its meanings and the struggles that have played a central role in defining political ideals and cultural identities; and Lynn Garafola and Marina Harss on modern ballet and the life of choreographer Bronislava Nijinska.

In memoriam

Anne Garrels 1951–2022

Tyler Stovall 1954–2021

Writers in Conversation

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 30th

6:00 PM: Brendan Gill Lecture

with Tomi Obaro

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1st

10:30 AM: Fierce Enough to Be Free: Five 19th-Century Women Who Helped Spark the First American Civil Rights Movement

with Janice Nimura & Dorothy Wickenden

1:00 PM: Nijinska, Ballet, Modernism

with Lynn Garafola & Marina Harss

2:30 PM: Russia and Ukraine at War: Imperial and Soviet Legacies

with Brigid O'Keeffe & Victoria Smolkin

5:00 PM*: Benefit Event: A Haystack Evening at Husky Meadows Farm. Kitchen Confidential: Inside the World of New York Times Cooking

with Sam Sifton & Melissa Clark

This event is sold out.

***Separate registration and ticket purchase required.**

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2nd

9:30 AM: A Walk through City Meadow – Insects in Our Village

with Dr. Kimberly Stoner

11:00 AM: Collapsing Populations and the Fight for Life

with Oliver Milman & Michelle Nijhuis



Brendan Gill Lecture

**Tomi Obaro, author of
Dele Weds Destiny, a novel**

The New York Times Book Review calls *Dele Weds Destiny* a “loving and lively debut novel... Obaro’s unadorned style can come into its own... the quality of writing takes on a political power.”

The story of three once-inseparable college friends in Nigeria who reunite in Lagos for the first time in thirty years, this is a sparkling novel about mothers and daughters, culture and class, sex and love, and the extraordinary resilience of female friendship.

Funmi, Enitan, and Zainab first meet at university in Nigeria and become friends for life despite their differences. Funmi is beautiful, brash, and determined; Enitan is homely and eager, seeking escape from her single mother’s smothering and needy love; Zainab is elegant and reserved, raised by her father’s first two wives after her mother’s death in childbirth. Their friendship is complicated but enduring, and over the course of the novel the reader learns about their loves and losses.

Some thirty years later, the three women are reunited in Lagos for the first time. The occasion: Funmi’s daughter, Destiny, is getting married. Enitan brings her American daughter, Remi. Zainab travels by bus, nervously leaving her ailing husband in the care of their son. Funmi, hosting the weekend with her wealthy husband, wants everything to go perfectly. But as the big day approaches, it becomes clear that something is not right. As the novel builds, the complexities of the mothers’ friendship—and the private wisdom each has earned—come to bear on a riveting, heartrending moment of decision.

Friday, September 30th • 6:00 PM

Tomi Obaro is an editor at BuzzFeed News. *Dele Weds Destiny* is her first novel.

“The bonds between women—as friends, and across the generations—are the jewels that make this story shine.”

—Tayari Jones, author of *An American Marriage*

“*Dele Weds Destiny* is, among a great many other things, such a generous and patient consideration of life, and of lives. Tomi Obaro is such a skilled writer, with an eye towards the vivid and vivacious moments that others might dismiss as stillness. I am so thankful for the world of this book, and so excited for everyone who gets to *sit in it*.”

—Hanif Abdurraqib, author of *They Can't Kill Us Until They Kill Us*

Longtime Norfolk resident Brendan Gill died in 1997. In 1998 The Brendan Gill Lecture was established by the Norfolk Library Associates to honor Gill's generous contributions to the library. As an admirer of the library's cultural spirit, Gill exuberantly donated himself to library events whenever he was asked to participate.

Brendan Gill wrote for *The New Yorker* magazine for over fifty years. He contributed short stories, profiles, book reviews and was in successive decades the movie, theater, and architecture critic. Gill's book *Here at the New Yorker* describes the oddities, wonders, and joys of his work at the magazine.

As part of his New York City life, Brendan Gill served as Chairman of the Board of the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Municipal Arts Society, where he was instrumental in saving Grand Central Station.



Fierce Enough to Be Free: Five 19th-Century Women Who Helped Spark the First American Civil Rights Movement

Pulitzer Finalist Janice P. Nimura, bestselling author of *The Doctors Blackwell: How Two Pioneering Sisters Brought Medicine to Women and Women to Medicine*, and bestselling author Dorothy Wickenden, author of *The Agitators: Three Friends Who Fought for Abolition and Women's Rights*, illuminate extraordinary women who overcame racism and misogyny to confront injustice and change the world.

Harriet Tubman, Frances A. Seward, and Martha Coffin Wright were unlikely allies, avid activists, and close friends who drove abolition and women's rights forward. Sisters Elizabeth and Emily Blackwell were trailblazing physicians who studied medicine when the very idea suggested they were either wicked or insane. Dorothy Wickenden and Janice P. Nimura discuss the mid-19th-century social and political inequities that motivated these women, the obstacles they overcame, the sisterhood that sustained them, and the battles that remain.

Saturday, October 1st • 10:30 AM

Janice P. Nimura received a Public Scholar Award from the National Endowment for the Humanities in support of her work on *The Doctors Blackwell*, which was a finalist for the 2022 Pulitzer Prize in biography. Her previous book, *Daughters of the Samurai*, was a New York Times Notable book in 2015. Her essays and book reviews have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Smithsonian*, and *LitHub*.

Dorothy Wickenden is the author of *Nothing Daunted* and *The Agitators*. Since 1996 she has been the executive editor of *The New Yorker*, and she also writes for the magazine and is the moderator of its weekly podcast “The Political Scene.” A former Nieman Fellow at Harvard, Wickenden was national affairs editor at *Newsweek* from 1993 to 1995 and previously was the longtime executive editor of the *New Republic*.

“Defly, with a keen eye, Janice P. Nimura has resurrected Elizabeth and Emily Blackwell in all their feisty, thrilling, trailblazing splendor.”

— Stacy Schiff

“Harriet Tubman, Martha Coffin Wright, and Frances A. Seward are the examples we need right now—another time of divisiveness and dissension over our nation’s purpose ‘to form a more perfect union.’”

— Hillary Rodham Clinton



Nijinska, Ballet, Modernism

Lynn Garafola, author of *La Nijinska: Choreographer of the Modern*, and journalist Marina Harss will discuss Nijinska's career, the evolution of her choreographic voice, her personal experiences in the face of some of the greatest upheavals of the twentieth century, and her struggles in the mercurial and cliquish—and sometimes sexist—world of ballet.

Although overshadowed in life and legend by her brother Vaslav Nijinsky, Bronislava Nijinska had a far longer and more productive career. An architect of twentieth-century neoclassicism, she experienced the transformative power of the Russian Revolution and created her greatest works under the influence of its avant-garde. Many of her ballets rested on the probing of gender boundaries, a mistrust of conventional gender roles, and the heightening of the ballerina's technical and artistic prowess. Nijinska's career sheds new light on the modern history of ballet, and in recuperating the memory of lost works and forgotten artists, many of them women, Garafola's book opens new paths for contemporary ballet.

Saturday, October 1st • 1:00 PM

Lynn Garafola is a professor emerita of dance at Barnard College, Columbia University. A historian and critic, she is the author of *Diaghilev's Ballets Russes*, *Legacies of Twentieth-Century Dance*, and most recently *La Nijinska: Choreographer of the Modern*. She has also curated three major New York-centered exhibitions—on New York City Ballet, Jerome Robbins, and Arthur Mitchell. A former Getty Scholar, she is a recipient of fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and the Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers.

Marina Harss is a writer, journalist, and critic based in New York City, writing on all aspects of dance, and occasionally on opera. Her writing appears regularly in *The New Yorker*, the *New York Times*, *Fjord Review*, *Dance Magazine*, *Pointe Magazine*, and elsewhere. She has also written for *The Nation*, the *Guardian*, *The Threepenny Review*, the *Boston Globe*, *Ballet Review*, *Dance Gazette*, *Playbill*, and *BAMBill*. She is the author of an upcoming book about the choreographer Alexei Ratmansky, to be published by Farrar Straus and Giroux in 2023.

"It's gratifying when a biographer and her subject are as perfectly matched."

—Wendy Lesser, *New York Times Book Review*



Russia and Ukraine at War: Imperial and Soviet Legacies

Two historians of Russian and Soviet history reflect on the past as essential for understanding the present war in Ukraine. Brigid O'Keeffe's *The Multiethnic Soviet Union and Its Demise* explains how ethnicity was central to the USSR's creation, evolution, and stunning collapse in 1991. Victoria Smolkin's *A Sacred Space Is Never Empty: A History of Soviet Atheism* explores the Soviet project's attempt, and persistent failure, to eradicate religion and transform spirituality.

Since the Russian invasion in February 2022, Ukrainians have put up a fierce resistance both to the attack and to the historical falsifications underpinning it. Together, O'Keeffe and Smolkin will discuss the many ways enduring legacies of imperial Russia and the Soviet Union continue to shape how people on both sides of the current war understand the world, history, and their place in both.

Saturday, October 1st • 2:30 PM

Brigid O'Keeffe is professor of history at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York. She is the author of *The Multiethnic Soviet Union and Its Demise*; *Esperanto and Languages of Internationalism in Revolutionary Russia* (winner of the Ab Imperio Prize); and *New Soviet Gypsies: Nationality, Performance, and Selfhood in the Early Soviet Union*. O'Keeffe is at work on her next book, "The Family Litvinov: A History of the Twentieth Century."

Victoria Smolkin is associate professor of history at Wesleyan University. Her first book, *A Sacred Space Is Never Empty: A History of Soviet Atheism* (2018), was awarded Honorable Mention for the 2019 Wayne S. Vucinich Book Prize, and the Russian translation was longlisted for the Alexander Patigosky Literary Prize. She is currently at work on two projects: "The Wall of Memory: Ukraine and the Impossibility of History," and "The World of Tomorrow: Communism, Cosmism, and the Fate of Utopia."

"Brigid O'Keeffe's wonderful book is a gem in miniature. No other work explains the multinational complexity of the USSR so insightfully in such a brief form."

—Willard Sunderland, professor of modern history, University of Cincinnati

"This is a very important book, highly innovative and superbly researched. Smolkin has written nothing less than a history of the making—and subsequent unmaking—of Soviet atheism. A must-read."

—Denis Kozlov, author of *The Readers of "Novyi Mir": Coming to Terms with the Stalinist Past*



Kitchen Confidential: Inside the World of New York Times Cooking*

Bestselling cookbook authors Sam Sifton, founding editor of NYT Cooking, and Melissa Clark, *New York Times* food columnist and author of the recently published *Dinner in One*, come together to discuss good appetites and no recipes (actually a lot of recipes!) and hot pans and clacking keyboards: food writing in the modern age.

From the one-dish meal to the four-course dinner, if ever there were two writers who understood good food and how to make it, Sam Sifton and Melissa Clark are at the top of the list. Writing about food daily and creating some of the bestselling cookbooks of our times, Sam and Melissa understand the trials and tribulations of the kitchen, the fast-paced world of a busy family, and the need to put a good meal on the table.

Melissa Clark brings her home cook's expertise and no-fuss approach to the world of one-pot/pan cooking in her new book, while Sam Sifton and the staff at NYT Cooking bring you a daily array of cooking inspiration and recipes (which you can follow or not!).

Saturday, October 1st • 5:00 PM

***Husky Meadows Farm – Ticketed Event
This event is sold out.**

Sam Sifton is an assistant managing editor at the *New York Times* and the founding editor of *New York Times Cooking*, for which he writes newsletters. He previously served as the newspaper's food editor, its national news editor, its restaurant critic, and its culture editor. Sifton is the author of several cookbooks, most recently *See You on Sunday* and *The New York Times No-Recipe Recipe Cookbook*.

Melissa Clark is a food columnist for the *New York Times*/*New York Times Cooking*, where she writes the popular column "A Good Appetite" and has starred in over 100 cooking videos. She's written 45 cookbooks, the latest of which, *Dinner in One*, focuses on one-pot, one-pan, one-skillet meals. She's the recipient of two James Beard Awards and two IACP (International Association of Culinary Professionals) Awards, and her work has been selected for the Best American Food Writing series.

"As always, Clark has home cooks in mind with this collection of streamlined, crowd-pleasing recipes; perfect for beginning cooks and readers looking to build a repertoire of sure-fire dinner options."

— *Library Journal*

"New York Times food columnist Clark calls upon her decades of 'recipe streamlining' in this excellent guide to weeknight cooking."

— *Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

"Sam Sifton wants you to ditch the recipe and have some fun in the kitchen. The founding editor of NYT Cooking does away with fussy ingredient lists and step-by-step instructions, opting instead for casual, conversational descriptions that allow home cooks to improvise, learn and evolve."

— *TimeOut*

***Separate registration and ticket purchase required—visit our website at www.norfolkfoundation.net/book-talks. Seating is limited.**



A Walk through City Meadow — Insects in Our Village

Come and walk with us through the city meadow in Norfolk with Dr. Kimberly Stoner, Agricultural Entomologist Emeritus at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, and see what we can find. We will stroll the boardwalk in search of insects that live among us—the earwig nymph, northern paper wasp, the question mark butterfly, water strider, the Devil’s coach-horse beetle, or maybe even the chestnut-marked pondweed moth. We will explore the surrounding area as time allows.

Dr. Kimberly Stoner has recently retired after 34 years as a scientist at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. She has been a vegetable entomologist, studying alternatives to insecticides for managing vegetable insects, and, in more recent years, a bee specialist, studying bee exposure to pesticides, crop pollination, and bee diversity in Connecticut.

Sunday, October 2nd • 9:30 AM

In retirement, she is still working on some scientific projects, but also developing a podcast on the local environment in and around New Haven.

This walk is jointly sponsored by the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area (Housatonic Heritage), which exists to illuminate the diverse, rich identity of the Upper Housatonic River Valley region and to preserve and promote its historical, cultural, and natural resources. Their mission is to support, stimulate, and advance the region's economic vitality and quality of life, looking toward a sustainable future for the benefit of residents and visitors. This National Heritage Area facilitates collaboration with regional organizations, working as a catalyst for regional thinking.

Visit them at housatonicheritage.org.

Registration is limited. Meet at Robertson Plaza, Station Place, Norfolk.



Collapsing Populations and the Fight for Life

Oliver Milman, author of *The Insect Crisis: The Fall of the Tiny Empires that Rule the World*, and Michelle Nijhuis, author of *Beloved Beasts: Fighting for Life in An Age of Extinction*, discuss the looming collapse of the insect world in relation to conservation and environmental movements.

Insects—sometimes delightful, probably more often annoying—are usually invisible; they are the background against which other species like panda bears, whooping cranes, and polar bears stand out. They are the bugs you swat away as you get your photo of the wolf into focus. Yet every so often a particular insect or class of insects emerges into distinct visibility, like the monarch butterfly, and the familiar campaigns that have historically separated species conservation from environmental concerns no longer apply.

As Nijhuis argues throughout her book, these two impulses, toward species conservation and environmental defense, have always been in both alliance and tension. Under the pressure of climate change, the need now, perhaps

Sunday, October 2nd • 11:00 AM

nowhere more urgently than in the prospect of insect collapse, is for new ways of thinking and living our life in nature.

Oliver Milman is a British journalist and the environmental correspondent at the *Guardian US*. He has reported from places such as the Great Barrier Reef and the Arctic, and once surveyed an underwater volcano in a mini submarine. *The Insect Crisis: The Fall of the Tiny Empires that Rule the World* is his first book.

Michelle Nijhuis is a project editor at *The Atlantic*, a longtime contributing editor of *High Country News* and a regular contributor to the *New York Review of Books*. *Beloved Beasts: Fighting for Life in An Age of Extinction* was named one of the best books of 2021 by the *Chicago Tribune*, *Smithsonian Magazine*, *Booklist*, and other publications.

“Milman has written a timely and important book, thoroughly researched and immensely persuasive. Our own wellbeing and survival, as it turns out, is entwined with the fate of insects. A reader senses that the time for counting bugs on the windshield has passed, that we must act boldly to preserve these irreplaceable creatures.”

— Tucker Coombe, Terrain.org

“[*Beloved Beasts* is] at once thoughtful and thought-provoking ... a crucial addition to the literature of our troubled time.”

— Elizabeth Kolbert, author of *The Sixth Extinction*

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HAYSTACK BOOK TALKS

Steve Melville & Michael Selleck, co-chairs

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What writers are saying about Haystack Book Festival

"As a writer of environmental books, I've had the pleasure and fun of appearing at book festivals around the country, but I sincerely think my favorite so far was the Norfolk Book Festival in Connecticut in 2019. There are bigger festivals, with more writers and bigger crowds. But Norfolk's festival, leading with that small town, autumn-in-New-England charm, outdoes Tucson's or San Antonio's or Missoula's by a wide margin. And the lit-savvy audience of book lovers there is second to none. I'd go back at the drop of a hat."

—Dan Flores, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Coyote America: A Natural and Supernatural History*

"My visit to Haystack was among the highlights of my book-promotion experience. Rarely have I spoken in such a lovely venue, to such an engaged audience, with such a thoughtfully selected interlocutor. I had a wonderful time as both a participant and attendee, and highly recommend the festival to any lover of literature!"

—Ben Goldfarb, author of *Eager: The Surprising, Secret Life of Beavers and Why They Matter*

"I have nothing but fond memories of my time at Haystack. It was a weekend of provocative ideas, good books, and stimulating conversation."

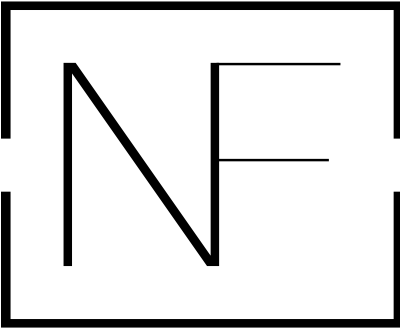
—Ken Ilgunas, author of *This Land Is Our Land: How We Lost the Right to Roam and How to Take It Back*

“As a writer, it’s so important for me to know and understand my readers. Coming to Norfolk for the Haystack Book Festival was a warm, wonderful opportunity to meet with people who truly love literature, who love words, who love books. Being in such a beautiful environment, speaking in a room full of interested, curious people who wanted to know more about what I do was a joy. I hope I am invited back.”

—Janine di Giovanni, author of *The Morning They Came For Us: Dispatches from Syria*

“Participating in the Haystack Book Festival was a great pleasure. The talks were impeccably organized, set in a beautiful spot, and attended by thoughtful and enthusiastic readers. It was a joy to discuss my work with a brilliant colleague in front of a well-read and engaged audience.”

—Martha Saxton, author of *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington*



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