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We endeavor to inspire members of diverse communities by providing opportunities to experience authors who speak on issues that reflect our values, such as justice, compassion, civic responsibility, acceptance, courage, and equity.

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Dear friends,

It is time for another season, time to come together again, to read books and build community. Every season for the past 36 years, you have allowed us to bring the best writers to Pittsburgh. This season, especially, is a clear indication of that support.

We have put together a tremendous lineup of award-winning authors and books for you. From returning Ten Evenings authors like George Saunders, Min Jin Lee, Emily St. John Mandel, Douglas Stuart, and Edwidge Danticat to first-timers like Michael Lewis, Nicholas Boggs, Author Sze, and Deesha Philyaw, this season features a wide range of topics and interests curated for every reader.

We knew you would be excited when we were planning the season, but we did not expect your overwhelmingly positive response. More than 90% of those who subscribed last year renewed their full subscriptions this year. More new subscribers have chosen the select-five subscriptions.

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Sony Ton-Aime
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Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures

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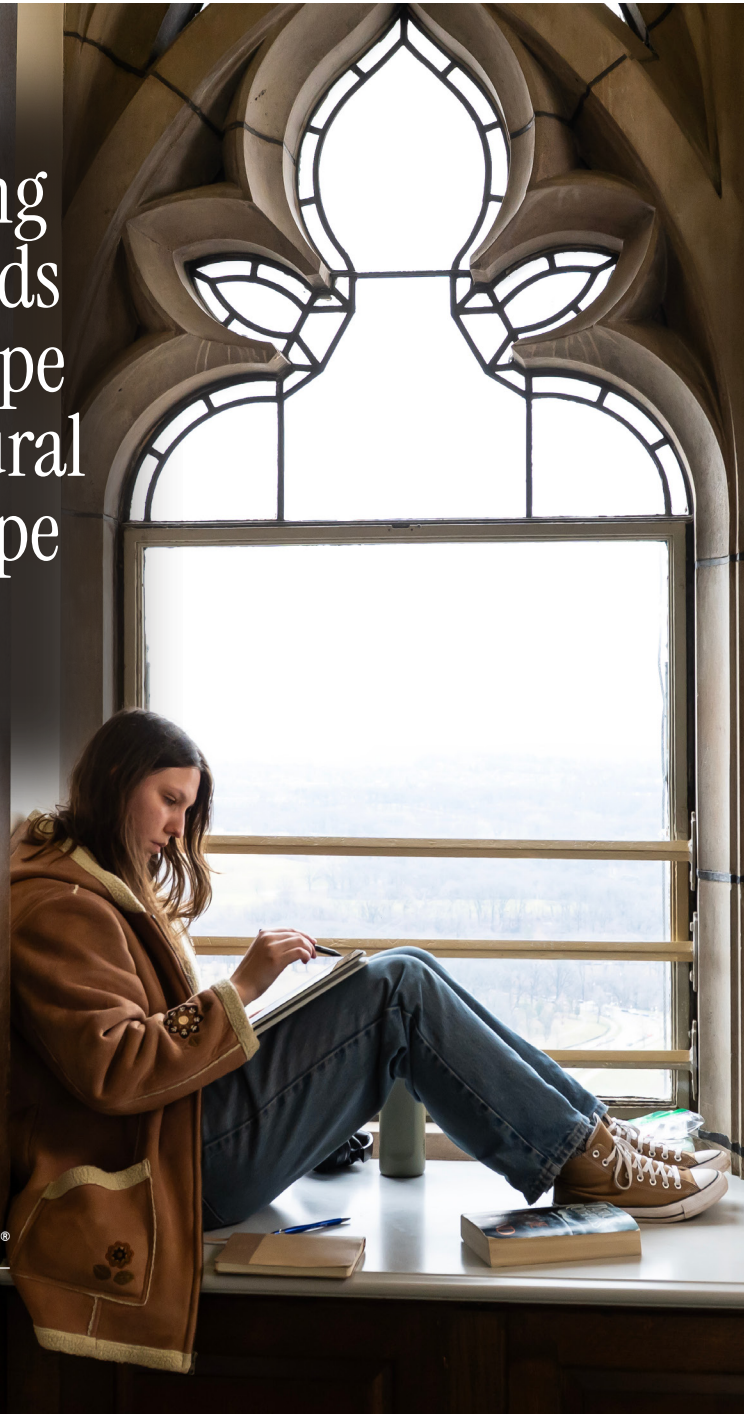
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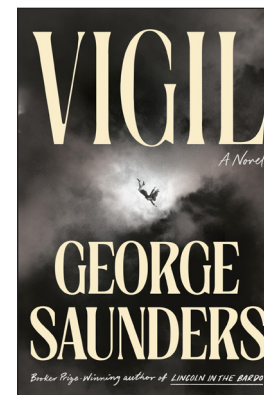
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GEORGE SAUNDERS

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2026



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"When I'm imagining a character and am about to do some interior monologue, I lower myself into that person and have a look around," said George Saunders in a 2022 interview with Sumanth Prabhakar for *Orion*. "What's he seeing, how's he standing, and so on. So that character becomes an amalgam of his intended function in the story so far (as determined by me), plus... me."

That technique has stood Saunders well during his career. One of America's most accomplished writers, he won the Booker Prize for his first novel, *Lincoln in the Bardo*, in 2017. He is the recipient of several honors, including Guggenheim and MacArthur Fellowships, both in 2006.

Saunders worked as a roofer in Chicago, a doorman in Beverly Hills, and a slaughterhouse knuckle-puller before working as a technical writer and geophysical engineer. He earned an M.F.A. in creative writing from Syracuse University in 1988 and published his first short story,

“A Lack of Order in the Floating Object Room,” in *The New Yorker* in 1992.

From the beginning, Saunders looked to his many influences for inspiration.

“I really love Russian writers, especially from the 19th, early 20th century: Gogol, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Babel,” Saunders told Chipotle’s “Cultivating Thought” author series in 2016. “I love the way they take on the big topics. I’m also inspired by a certain absurdist comic tradition that would include influences like Mark Twain, Daniil Kharmis, Groucho Marx, Monty Python, Steve Martin, Jack Handey, etc. And then, on top of that, I love the strain of minimalist American fiction writing: Sherwood Anderson, Ernest Hemingway, Raymond Carver, Tobias Wolff.”

In 2025, Saunders was given the Medal for Distinguished Contributions to American Letters from the National Book Foundation, a lifetime achievement award whose other winners include Toni Morrison, Judy Blume, and Stephen King.

“I never understood literature as anything but that thing to help us live better, something that allows me to cut to the chase,” he told Hillel Italie of the Associated Press in 2025. “Communication and kindness – this radical idea that other people are as real as we are.”

Saunders’ latest book, *Vigil*, is about a spectral guide, Jill, watching over the deathbed of an oil tycoon who, according to Dwight Garner’s review in the *New York Times*, is a “scoundrel, a true villain, a man who in a series of nesting dolls would emerge after Kenneth Lay and Bernard Madoff.” A second guide emerges to question Jill’s theory as to whether

the tycoon could have been anyone unlike his true self.

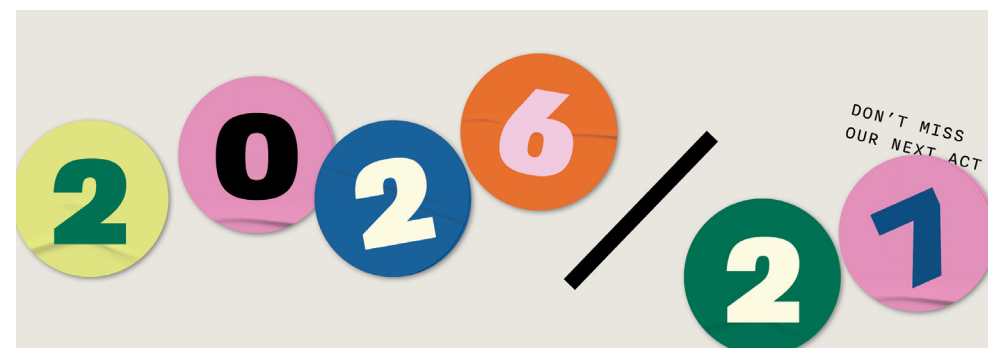
“[Saunders is] an ineluctably strange, dark, and funny writer whose work has some of Mark Twain’s subversive wit, Kurt Vonnegut’s cosmic playfulness, and Donald Barthelme’s laboratory blitzing of high and low culture,” Garner writes.

Interviewed by Stephen Colbert of *The Late Show* in February 2026, Saunders explained he’s the type of writer who starts writing and “a ghost just wafts into the room.”

“I think the writer is basically like a roller coaster designer,” Saunders said. “So at the beginning, you don’t know, I don’t think you should know, what you’re trying to do. But you’re trying to thrill the reader somehow or another.”

“I think you love Flannery O’Connor,” Saunders told Colbert. “And she said a really amazing thing. She said a writer can choose what he writes, but he can’t choose what he makes live. So what that means is you might have the idea – I’m this kind of writer – but if you do it and it’s boring, you’re not that kind of writer. If you think you’re going to be a string quartet writer like Shostakovich, and you write one and everybody falls asleep, that’s not it.”

“But if you start playing a polka and they dance, then you’re good.”



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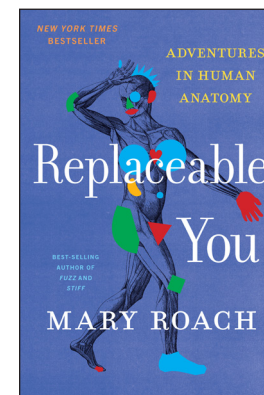
Pittsburgh Arts & Lectures

2026/27



MARY ROACH

MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2026



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Science and humor are not exactly comfortable bedfellows. But throughout her writing career, spanning books including *Gulp*, *Packing for Mars*, and her latest, *Replaceable You*, Roach has managed to find the whimsical side of human anatomy, the military and the human body at war, and life in zero gravity.

When she came upon the subject matter for *Stiff*, a book about cadaver research, she initially thought it was a terrible idea for a book.

“Who would go into a bookstore and look at a table of new nonfiction releases and go, like, ‘Oh yeah, this one about cadavers, that’s what I’m gonna do?’” Roach said during an interview with Christine Hermann of the Association of Health Care Journalists in 2025.

“I’m sort of the gateway drug to science,” Roach added. “I write books about science for people who don’t necessarily think that they’re interested in science.”

Roach has penned eight *New York Times*

bestsellers, serves as an advisor for *Orion* and *Undark* magazines, and won the American Engineering Societies' Engineering Journalism Award in a category for which, she writes on her website, she was the sole entrant.

Born in New Hampshire, Roach started her career as a freelance copy editor. *Stiff: The Curious Lives of Human Cadavers* (2003) was her first book. It launched a career in which she has found absurdities in the science-humor intersection.

For what became 2021's *Fuzz: When Nature Breaks the Law*, Roach initially thought she would write about agricultural crime. As she told Corrine Segal for Literary Hub, she was distracted by "grand theft avocado," where people steal avocados before the Super Bowl because there's so much demand for making guacamole, before focusing on the conflicts between humans and wildlife.

"I'm really very focused on what will be the most interesting reads," Roach told Segal. "There's a lot of initial flailing – calling people up, going places, then realizing it doesn't really fit. It might be six months in before I really have a strong sense of how this book will progress, what's going to be in it, and what the general order of the chapters will be."

"I don't recommend it as a way to write a book, but it seems to be how I do it."

Her most recent book, *Replaceable You*, examines prosthetics, robotics, and other ways that technology can interact with human anatomy. On her website, Roach notes that humans have long attempted to replace body parts, whether it's "sculpting noses from brass, borrowing skin from frogs and hearts from pigs, crafting eye parts from jet canopies and breasts from petroleum byproducts."

Today, body parts are grown from stem cells and harvested from 3D printers.

"It's endlessly fascinating," Roach told Gilbert Cruz for the *New York Times*. "It's this weird foreign planet, and I didn't study it in high school or college. So, I'm like that explorer who keeps finding new continents and having a blast. In a way, it's a logical topic for me – I seem to just be drawn to the human body and all its miraculousness and weirdness."



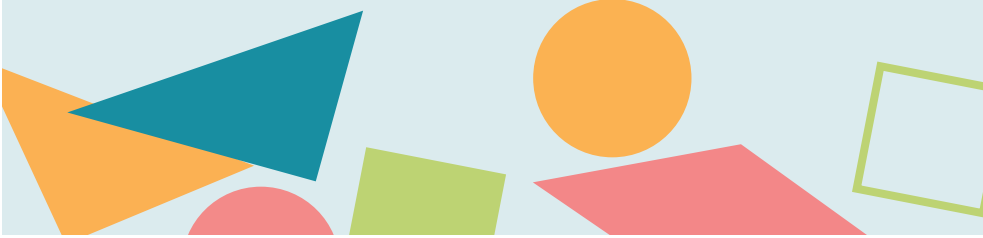
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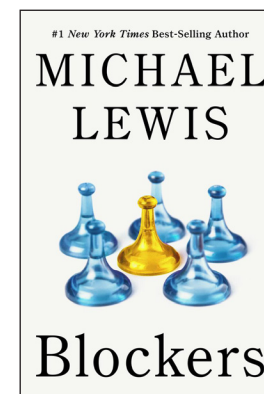
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LIFE CHANGING MEDICINE



Michael Lewis

Monday, October 26, 2026



Sponsored by UPMC

Before he became one of America’s best nonfiction writers, Michael Lewis had another goal: He wanted to be an art historian.

“I was not studying for an occupation,” Lewis told Peter High for *Forbes* in 2019. “Instead, I just fell in love with art history, and I did not know where that was going to take me. I enjoyed art history so much that once I finished my thesis, which was the first serious piece I had ever written, I wanted to keep doing that. However, my thesis advisor told me, ‘You do not have much of a future here.’”

After graduating from Princeton in 1982, he worked as a gofer for an art dealer, as an apprentice to a cabinet maker, and as a tour guide. After earning a graduate degree, he found his way into the world of finance.

After working at Solomon Brothers for three years, Lewis released *Liar’s Poker*, about his experiences as a bond salesman on Wall Street.

What he learned as his writing career progressed through more works of nonfiction, including *The Big Short*, *The Blindside*, and *Moneyball*, was that being succinct was always preferable.

“If you’re going to write a 500-page book, try to make it a 280-page-book,” Lewis said during a MasterClass episode in 2024. “If you’re going to write a 30-word sentence, see if you can do it in 15 words. That compression has incredible power. If there’s a shorter word, use that rather than the longer word.”

Lewis’ process for writing books such as *The Undoing Project*, about Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky, Israeli psychologists whose research reshaped how we understand human judgment, decision-making, and cognitive bias, is seemingly simple but exhaustive in its approach.

It was through interviewing Kahneman – Tversky had passed away – over seven years that the form of the book emerged.

“I’m indirect. I don’t go in head-on. I seek to get to know my subject and then worry about how to get exactly what I want out of them afterward,” Lewis told Cody Delistraty for the *Los Angeles Review of Books* in 2016. “I mean, it really is about hanging around a lot. It’s labor-intensive and inefficient. I never have an angle going in.”

Lewis’ books include *Going Infinite: The Rise and Fall of a New Tycoon* (2024), his deep examination of Sam Bankman-Fried and the collapse of FTX, and *Who Is Government? The Untold Story of Public Service* (2025), an edited collection in which Lewis and writers such as Dave Eggers, John Lanchester, Geraldine Brooks, Sarah

Vowell, and W. Kamau Bell wrote about unknown workers in the government.

“There’s something about Sam and the situation that pushes a lot of people’s buttons and causes them to want to judge quickly,” Lewis told Andrew R. Chow for *Time* magazine in 2023 about *Going Infinite*. “If I had five hours with the prosecutors, one of the things I would love to know is why they moved so fast. Sam’s lawyers had a guy on the inside and outside advising on when he might be extradited from the Bahamas. And no way did they think it was gonna happen as fast as it did, because they thought it would take the government much longer to figure out what the hell happened.”

For *Who is Government?*, Lewis admits he was at first worried that the writers he asked to participate in the project wouldn’t have luck in finding interesting subjects, as he had.

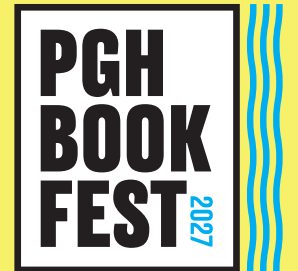
“It took about a nanosecond for that to not be true,” said Lewis.

“Every one of them found something almost right away and sometimes more than one thing,” Lewis told Jeffrey Rosen, the president and CEO of the National Constitution Center, during a discussion in 2025. “And they were, like, do I do this or I do this? And I could not believe the quality of the untold story. It was like there were all these stories that just don’t get told.”

Lewis’s new book, *Blockers*, relates the story of the early days of Donald Trump’s Department of Government Efficiency, as told by the public servants it targeted.

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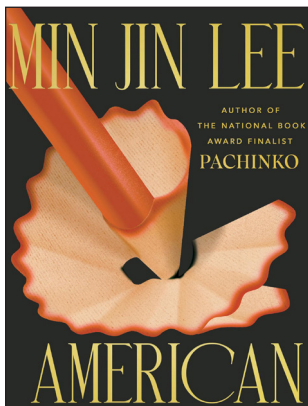
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Min Jin Lee

Monday, November 16, 2026



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Back in 1995, Min Jin Lee had to acknowledge that her writing was “awful.” She’d make coffee, read newspapers, and then try to write, but what she produced was subpar.

Then she learned that Willa Cather, the author of *O Pioneers!* and *My Ántonia*, read the Bible before writing.

“Cather did not strike me as a Christian writer, and rarely are there Bible references in her stories,” Lee told Elizabeth Flock for PBS in 2018. “That said, from Shakespeare down to the great Western writers throughout the 20th century, the Bible has served as a critical source of literary inspiration, so I figured, why not? My work couldn’t get any worse.”

Reading a chapter of the Bible each morning turned out to unlock Lee’s talents.

Her three books, *Free Food for Millionaires* (2007), *Pachinko* (2017), and now,

her latest, *American Hagwon* (2026), focus on the Korean diaspora.

Lee, having practiced law before turning to writing, said that she wrote for almost 30 years before being published. In an interview with Annie Midori Atherton for *Seattle* magazine, she said, “Writing is such a bizarre and unstable way to make a calling of your life... [W]e’re betting our lives and our time, our love, our resources, and our connections on this idea that somehow we’re going to write something and that this document matters.”

Lee did not set out to be a writer. When attending The Bronx High School of Science in New York City, she wanted to design desks and bookshelves and took a class called Scientific Technical Laboratory, which was woodworking with electricity.

As she told Christina Ohly Evans for the *Financial Times* in 2023, “I loved this class, where I made a psychedelic infinity mirror. At university, I thought I might be an architect, but then I met real architecture students and architects, which chastened me because there seemed to be so much hardship and delay.”

In *Pachinko* – the name is derived from the Japanese gambling game that is part pinball, part slot machine – Lee writes about the hopelessness Koreans feel at being unwanted in Japan.

“One of the things that we feel as we get older is that even though we keep trying, we feel like maybe sometimes the rules aren’t fair,” Lee said to Vivian Ewing for the *Vineyard Gazette*. “Maybe we need a little extra advantage, and yet we don’t give up because we know that we have to try. And I think that’s what life really is.

There’s a part of you that has to have a sense of blind hope. Like, maybe we’ll get lucky. Maybe we’re going to make it.”

American Hagwon, she told Alexis Cheung for *The Believer* in 2019, is focused on what is most important to Koreans around the world.

“I want to understand what thematically unifies Koreans who have experienced diaspora,” Lee said. “For me, the answer is education. It’s the thing Koreans care about more than anything, so the locus of that book will be the tutoring center that a Korean-American woman and man own together as partners, and also about the tutors, the students, and the parents.”

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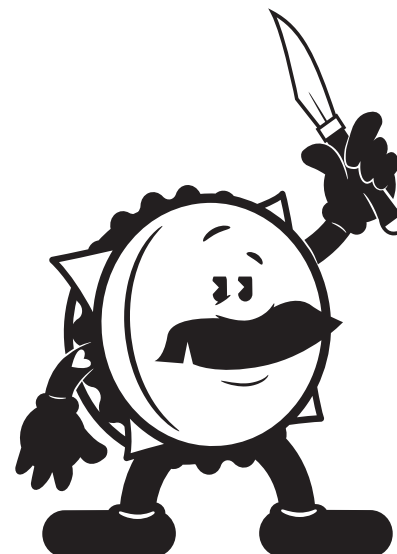
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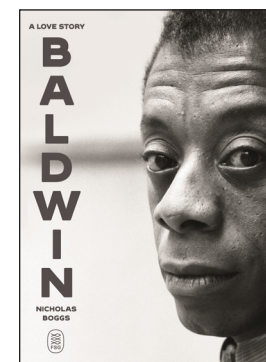
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Nicholas Boggs

Monday, December 7, 2026



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It took Nicholas Boggs approximately 30 years to finish writing *Baldwin: A Love Story*.

During that time, Boggs traveled to France to track down and interview James Baldwin's photographer for the children's book *Little Man, Little Man*, Yoran Cazac. From the archives at Harlem's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, whose collection of Baldwin's papers opened in 2017, Boggs's research eventually took him to Corsica and Istanbul to retrace the writer's life. All the while, Boggs was teaching at New York University before quitting to write full time.

"I'm 51 years old," Boggs told Sophia Nguyen for the *Washington Post* in 2025. "There were moments where I was like, why have I not written a book yet? Why is this taking so long?"

When it was published, *Baldwin* was reviewed to near universal acclaim, including by the *New York Times*, the *Los*

Angeles Times, the *Boston Globe*, and *The New Yorker*.

In Baldwin's day, he was a creative force.

"He was an absolute celebrity," Boggs told NPR's Michel Martin in 2025. "I mean, he was best friends with people like Marlon Brando, Maya Angelou and Nina Simone, Lena Horne, Harry Belafonte, you name it. When it came to Black America, there had never been anything quite like that in this country."

Baldwin's novels, particularly *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, *Giovanni's Room*, and *Just Above My Head*, were considered major works of fiction. Boggs contends that Baldwin was just as important as an essayist.

"There is this false binary of Baldwin the novelist and Baldwin the essayist, that he is better at one and not the other, and what I realized in the process of the weaving, writing, and reading of his letters was the way that they were so intertwined," Boggs explained to *The Rumpus* in 2026. "Even though *Another Country* [a novel] came after *The Fire Next Time* [a book of essays] chronologically, he was working on them at the same time, and you really can't understand them completely without looking at both of them together.

"His whole philosophy was that Black and white Americans must come together like lovers metaphorically to change the world, and you see him working that out in *Another Country* with these fictional characters who are failing miserably. Even if you prefer his nonfiction, that's fine, you can't truly understand all of its layers and depth unless you read his fiction. That was sort of a new edu-

cation for me, as someone who had always read them separately."

The continued notoriety of Baldwin and his work can't be dismissed. In an interview with C-SPAN's Peter Slen, Boggs said he regards Baldwin as having few peers who produced work that reflects his times.

"Having witnessed the civil rights movement, the women's rights movement, gay liberation, having lived internationally on several continents, he witnessed the world through many, many tumultuous changes," Boggs said. "His ability to capture that in words makes him the most important writer of the 20th century."



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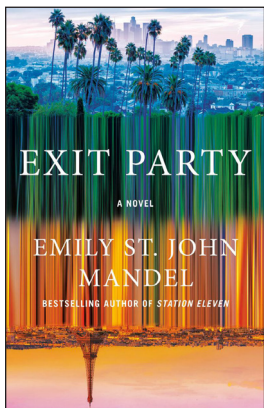
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Emily St. John Mandel

Monday, February 1, 2027



When Covid-19 shut down the world, Emily St. John Mandel found herself in demand. Her novel, *Station Eleven*, published in 2014, is about a similar scenario: An itinerant troupe of actors and musicians perform Shakespeare for scattered Great Lakes settlements after a pandemic.

“I felt profoundly uncomfortable about [the attention],” Mandel told Adrienne Westfield for *Esquire* in 2021. “I felt like if I did any of those assignments, there would be this whiff of using the pandemic to move units of *Station Eleven*, which just felt so gross.

“I really resisted talking about it in any public way. I felt uncomfortable being cast as an expert. At the same time, I was doing Zoom events every night, where it became clear that people really wanted to talk about pandemics. Eventually, I surrendered.”

Station Eleven is Mandel’s best-known novel, having been made into a miniseries for HBO Max that premiered in December of 2021. But it’s not her only work. From her first novel, *Last Night in Montreal*

(2009), through her latest, *Exit Party* (2026), Mandel is known for her involved plotting and her ability to weave various narratives into a coherent story.

In *Station Eleven*, for example, Mandel uses multiple characters who jump between timelines and plot segments. “I find it to be an interesting way to tell a story, partly for reasons of narrative tension – you can move toward climaxes in two timelines simultaneously – and partly because it’s a structure that lends itself to very in-depth character development, because you see those characters from different points of view and at different times in their lives,” Mandel told *F(r)iction* magazine’s Colin Griffith in 2015. “I also enjoy the challenge of this type of structure. Making it work is like solving a complicated puzzle.”

Exit Party, Mandel’s most recent novel, begins in 2031. As in her other books, Mandel blends speculative fiction with keen characterizations in a story about a woman meeting doppelgangers at a party where the host vanishes, just after a second Civil War in the U.S.

In *Exit Party*, Mandel resurrects a character from her second novel, *The Singer’s Gun*, who was that book’s villain.

“As a novelist – as a reader too – I’m always drawn to character above all else,” Mandel told Matthew Galloway for Anythink Libraries. “The characters I’m creating really matter. I feel like, as a reader, if I care about the character, I will follow the writer anywhere. I don’t even care about genre if the character is interesting to me.”

While Mandel’s stature in literary circles has grown, she’s not quite embraced the celebrity that comes with favorable reviews.

She told Eva Jurczyk of *The Rumpus* in 2020 that she tends to be old-fashioned about social media.

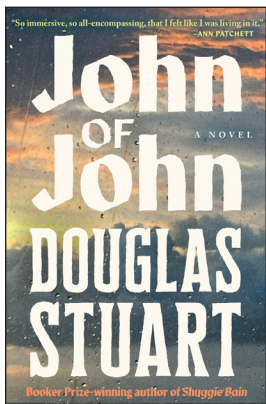
“I was raised with ideas around privacy and modesty that have kept me out of step with the social media era,” Mandel said. “I often enjoy following other people’s accounts of their lives. I like reading other people’s personal essays, but I’ve never really understood why I would want to reveal myself like that.

“It’s not that I have some magnificently exciting secret life. I mostly hang out with my four-year-old when I’m not writing. When I travel it’s usually to give a lecture somewhere. There’s not an enormous amount of glamour, though it does occasionally pop up.”



Douglas Stuart

Monday, March 1, 2027



Douglas Stuart had a successful career as a fashion designer, working 22 years for brands that included Jack Spade, Banana Republic, and Ralph Lauren.

For 12 years prior to the publication of his first book, *Shuggie Bain*, however, few people knew he'd been secretly working on that novel. When it won the Booker Prize in 2020, Stuart was not prepared for the commotion that ensued.

"As a writer, I never craved the spotlight," Stuart explained to Sophie Mancini for *Departures* in 2022. "In fact, writing is such a solitary pursuit that I'm happiest when I'm by myself and incredibly anonymous. But winning the Booker propelled me from the outside right into the center, right to the inside. I was unprepared for it, but I'm grateful for it."

The success of *Shuggie Bain* came along while Stuart was one of the heads of menswear design for Banana Republic.

He told Elena Hudgins Lyle of CBC Books that there was a reason he kept his writing a secret.

"I sat down one Sunday, and I just started to write, and it poured out of me," Stuart said. "And for the 10 years that I worked on *Shuggie Bain*, I didn't tell anybody. I was very careful not to tell any of my colleagues in fashion. I didn't tell any of my friends because I wanted to have something in this world that I could protect and nurture, and that was just for me. But also, I wanted to be able to fail in private if I was going to fail."

Shuggie Bain is about a boy growing up in 1980s Glasgow, Scotland, as he tries to save his brilliant but self-destructive mother from alcoholism and poverty. Stuart has stated the novel is "definitely a work of fiction," but also notes the similarities between his life and the book.

"My mother unfortunately suffered from addiction and didn't survive that addiction," Stuart told Mark Duell for the *Daily Mail* in 2020. "And so, for 30 years I've carried an awful lot of... sort of loss and love and pain. And I wanted really just to tell the story of what it was like to grow up queer in Glasgow, to grow up with a parent who you love but you couldn't save."

But *Shuggie Bain* is not emblematic of all Glaswegians, nor is it intended to be.

"It speaks for the working class family I created and that is it. But there are many people who survived under the Thatcher years and who flourished and who had great lives,"

Stuart told Andrés Ordorica for *The Skinny* in 2022. "There's probably young queer people who grew up in the '90s in Glasgow who had a great time that lived on the other side of the city. There's room for every kind of story, and so I reject all pressure to be a representative for something."

Stuart's latest novel, *John of John*, originated in 2019, when the author was waiting for his first novel to be published.

Stuart said to his husband one day, "I have an idea for a new novel I want to write, but I have to go to the Outer Hebrides." His husband was not exactly encouraging but told him to make the trip to do research for his book.

"As a kid growing up in the inner city of Scotland, I'd never been to the islands," Stuart told Geoff Bennett of *Settle In*, a PBS News podcast, in 2026. "... The Outer Hebrides are an archipelago of islands that sit off the northwest coast of Scotland. They're absolutely stunning, but they're quite difficult to get to.

"I think my husband was sick of dealing with my anxiety so he said, 'Twelve weeks away from me sounds like a great idea.'"

John of John eventually turned out to be about Cal, a young man returning to his home on a rural Scottish island who is grappling with his identity, his religion, and his father, John.



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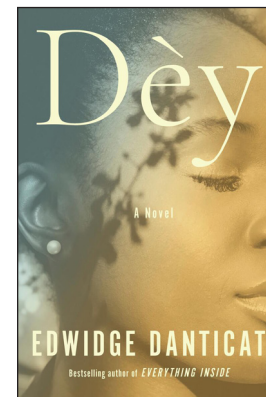
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Edwidge Danticat

Monday, March 15, 2027



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When Edwidge Danticat moved to Miami in 2002, after she got married, she thought she'd be there for two or three years. Instead she had children and put down unexpected roots.

"I wake up, it's 22 years, and my daughter was heading to college," Danticat said to Macollvie J. Neel of *The Haitian Times* in 2025. "I used to always joke with my girls. I said, you know, 'The time comes, tell me where you want to go to college. I'll apply for a job.' It's sort of like the Haitian parents' [thing] – 'I'm following you to school.'"

Danticat is the author of 20 books, including her debut, *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994); *The Farming of Bones* (1998), a historical novel; and *Brother, I'm Dying* (2007), a memoir.

In Haiti, the writer was raised by an aunt and uncle while her parents were building a life in the U.S. She came to New York City when she was 12, first living in Brooklyn before moving to Miami.

“I’ve always missed the city. There’s something about it, too. I don’t know if it’s because it’s the first place I landed when I was a kid.”

Writing about her experiences was a way for Danticat to make sense of her life, she told WLRN, a public radio station in Miami, in 2025.

“It’s how I honor the people I love, the people who are still with me ... It’s just how all those things are processed through me,” Danticat said. “And I think art sometimes makes us vessels, and even the person creating is not always sure how that stuff comes through.

“But you remain open. And if you practice enough, then things come out of it that also might be helpful to you in the creation, but it also might be helpful to other people and their own processing of the world we share.”

In her works, Danticat often explores issues of identity. But, she told Nadège T. Clitandre for the now-archived Bloomsbury Literary Studies blog, because of her own gender and skin color, the issue is not straightforward.

“I think I have multiple identities in which I fold myself,” Danticat said. “I am Haitian. I am Black. I am a woman. I am Caribbean. I am a Black woman Caribbean writer. I think I hold on to multiplicities. When I was first published ... people used to talk a lot about authenticity. I often felt very inauthentic because I was writing about Haiti in English, so I would say I am the least authentic writer ever, just to free myself from the burden of it. But in the inauthenticity I was claiming, I always saw a kind of welcomed multiplicity.”

Dèy, Danticat’s latest, is about Magnolia Elie, a Miami real estate agent who survives a mass shooting but tells no one. Instead, she begins quietly following the stories of those who didn’t survive, and a couple who did. It’s based on an incident from 2017 when Danticat thought she was in the middle of a mass shooting at a mall while Christmas shopping. What sounded like gunfire may have been kids tampering with the mall’s sound system. Even so, shoppers were fleeing, and her body never forgot the feeling of it.

“*Dèy*” is the Haitian word for grief and mourning, but the novel is also about heartache.

“It’s also about a family trying to stay meaningfully connected across distance while yearning to feel rooted in the different places they call home,” Danticat wrote on her website, edwidedanticat.com. “It’s about devotion to loved ones, to community, and to the quiet rituals that keep us going through impossible times. One of the many questions running through this novel is how to protect the people we love when so much is beyond our control. There are no simple answers, in life or in novels, yet this question becomes increasingly urgent for Magnolia, as it has for many of us.”

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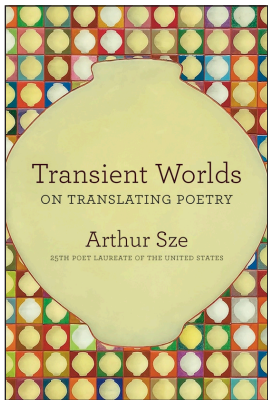
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Arthur Sze

Monday, April 26, 2027



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After Arthur Sze moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1972, he worked for the Poetry-in-the-Schools program. He especially enjoyed working with Native students.

In 1984, Phil Foss, the director of the creative writing program at the Institute of American Indian Arts, wanted to hire him.

But there was an obstacle to overcome.

“First, the Institute had a hiring policy with preference for Native American applicants, and second, I did not have a graduate degree,” Sze told Esther Belin of *Poetry* magazine in 2022. “But Jon [Wade, president of the Bureau of Indian Affairs] maneuvered through the BIA bureaucracy and created a position called ‘Permanent Intermittent.’ This position did not guarantee, from semester to semester, any classes or benefits. I applied, was hired, and joined Phil Foss

and Mei-mei Berssenbrugge as the third creative writing faculty member. Little did I know that five years later I would become the head of the program.”

From that humble beginning, Sze – a second-generation American born of Chinese parents in New York City – has seen his career skyrocket. He has published 12 collections of poetry and was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize in 2015.

But his crowning achievement was being named the United States Poet Laureate in 2025, the first Asian-American to serve in that role.

“I feel a responsibility to do my best to widen and deepen the appreciation and recognition of poetry,” Sze told *Publishers Weekly*’s Nathalie op de Beeck in 2025.

Sze, whose tenure as U.S. Poet Laureate has been extended through 2026–27, has created poetry that is a “nourishing tonic for the mind,” said Naomi Shihab Nye for poetry.org.

“Presences of the natural world, wide consciousness, and time combine in exquisitely shaped and weighted lines and stanzas to create a poetry of deep attunement and lyrical precision,” Shihab Nye wrote. “Sze’s ongoing generous exchange with Asian poets, and his devotion to translation in collections such as *The Silk Dragon*, enrich the canon of world poetry immeasurably.”

As U.S. Poet Laureate, Sze tours the country to promote the form. Asked to design a signature project, he chose to construct a project connect-

ing poetry in translation with people. In 2026, he published *Transient Worlds: On Translating Poetry*, which contains 23 poems from 13 different languages, including Chinese, French, German, Spanish, Navajo, and Greek. Sze thinks the importance of poetry can’t be overstated.

“Poetry has a crucial role to play in our lives,” Sze told Richard Chang for *Culture OC*, a newsletter, in 2026. “We’re living in a very fast-paced world. We have the internet and social media and smartphones, and for that speed, we also sacrifice depth. We’re losing depth of perception.”

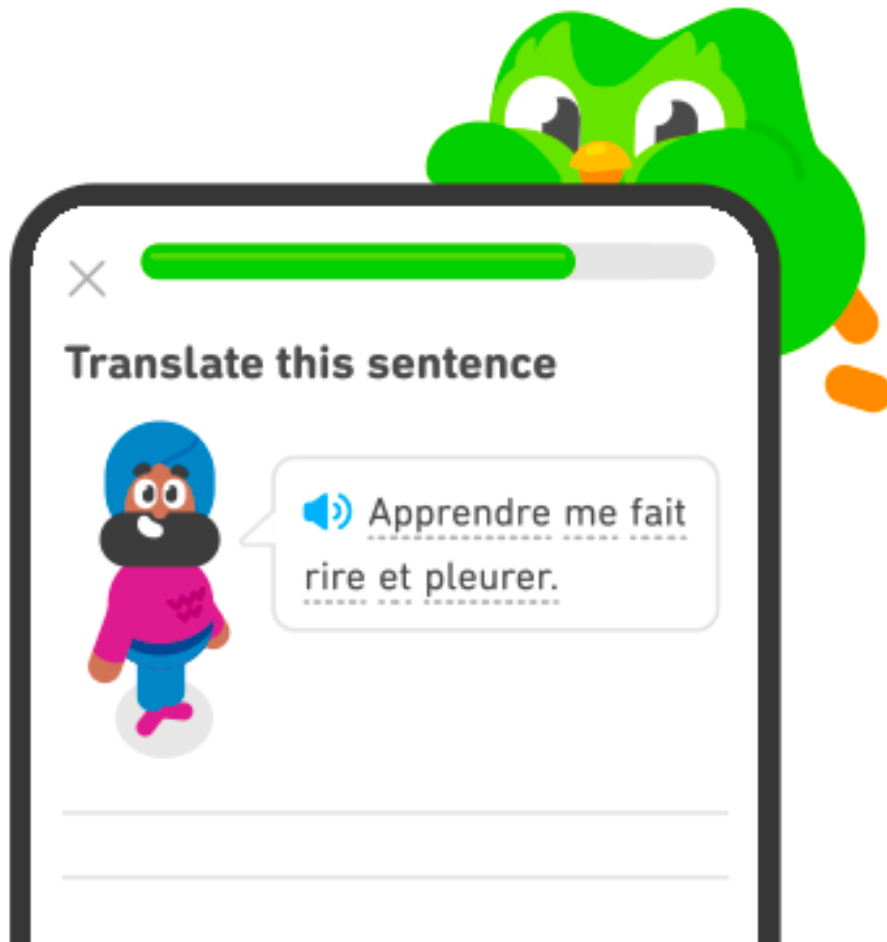
“You cannot speed-read a poem. Poetry communicates through sound and rhythm; it’s best if you speak it aloud. My book is designed in zones – if you only have 15 minutes, you can still read one section. A reader may only have small increments of time.

“Poetry has a crucial role to play. It makes us slow down, and in doing that, it deepens our experience. It helps us center ourselves, get more situated in our bodies. And so we’re not just zooming on the surface.”



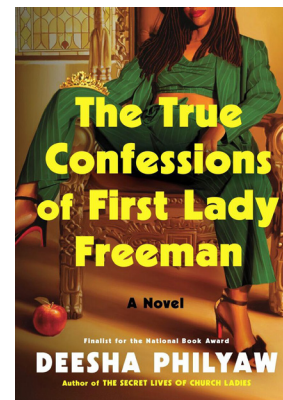
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Deesha Philyaw

Monday, May 10, 2027



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Where does Deesha Philyaw get her story ideas?

Anywhere and everywhere, but especially from words a person may say.

“Sometimes a story starts out for me as an idea or a situation, but most often it starts out as a thought or a line of dialogue,” Philyaw told Courtney Harler, editor-in-chief of *CRAFT*, a literary magazine, in 2024.

“And that thought or line becomes the blueprint on which I build the rest of the story. I not only follow the substance of the thought or dialogue, I also figure out who is thinking or speaking, how they are saying it, what their voice or internal monologue sounds like, and what the context is for all of it.”

Philyaw’s debut collection of short stories, *The Secret Lives of Church Ladies*, was published in 2020 and earned her

the 2021 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction, the 2020/2021 Story Prize, and the 2020 Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction, a *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize.

Philyaw worked in corporate communications at a Pittsburgh-area bank before quitting to pursue her writing consultancy and freelance writing full-time. Among her influences and inspirations are Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, Nafissa Thompson-Spires, and Bassey Ikpi, but Philyaw has clearly developed a style of her own.

During an interview with *Catapult*, a literary magazine, in 2022, interviewer Sari Botton called her an economical writer, but Philyaw said that that aspect of her writing has been honed over time.

“When I first started writing twenty years ago, I was explaining everything,” Philyaw told Botton. “Exposition was everything. And really, unless you’re Toni Morrison, you really can’t get away with that. That’s not to say all she writes is exposition – it’s just that she writes it so well.

“At the outset, my exposition was a couple of things happening. One, it was me telling myself the story, which is how a lot of us write drafts. Over time I’ve gotten more economical about that. For me, getting better as a writer is learning how to get to the essence of things and boil down all of that exposition and backstory.”

In 2021, Philyaw was named John and Renée Grisham Writer-in-Residence at the University of Mississippi.

“Mississippi has this long, complicated literary legacy, and to be in the place where so many of the complex and beautiful stories have been told by complex and beautiful people, I’m excited about that. And the food,” Philyaw told Brittany Brown for the *Magee Courier & Simpson County News*.

Her satirical debut novel, *The True Confessions of First Lady Freeman*, was published in September 2026. The story follows Scharisse Freeman, who married a megachurch pastor fifteen years her senior, leaving behind her humble roots.

“I remember the day I turned in my manuscript to my publisher for *Church Ladies* in 2019, everything just crystallized for *True Confessions*,” Philyaw told Lauren Puckett-Pope for *Elle* in 2026. “I was ready. I was more experienced as a storyteller... I could really let go and let Scharisse be herself, let her love being a first lady and all the culture and lifestyle that I don’t love. And then snatch it all away from her, and really give her some problems to contend with, in the form of a scandal that breaks.”

PAST TEN EVENINGS AUTHORS

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Berle, Peter A.A.	10/11/1994	Doyle, Roddy	1/28/2008
Beschloss, Michael	12/9/2002	Duncan, Calvin & Cull, Sophie	2/9/2026
Biography with a Point of View	1/13/2003	Edugyan, Esi	3/9/2020
Blount Jr., Roy	9/24/2001	Egan, Jennifer	12/4/2017, 2/12/2024
Bohannon, Cat	3/3/2025	Egan, Timothy	4/3/2017
Boo, Katherine	10/22/2018	Eggers, Dave	12/10/2018
Bosworth, Patricia	1/13/2003	Ehrenreich, Barbara	3/29/2004
Bourdain, Anthony	3/31/2008	Enger, Leif	12/9/2024
Boyle, T. C.	4/29/1994, 3/3/2003	Erdrich, Louise	3/6/2000
Bradlee, Ben	10/30/1995	Estrich, Susan	1/24/2000
Breyer, Justice Stephen	10/18/2010	Evaristo, Bernardine	4/5/2021
Brinkley, Douglas	11/21/2016	Everett, Percival	3/24/2025
Brown, Daniel James	3/14/2016	Fairstein, Linda	3/21/2005
Brown, Rosellen	4/14/1992	Fallows, James	4/7/1997
Brown, Tina	9/22/2008	Faludi, Susan	2/26/2018
Browne, Janet	2/9/2009	Feiffer, Jules	2/7/2000
Bryson, Bill	11/18/2002, 10/23/2006	Flournoy, Angela	3/23/2026
Buckley Jr., William F.	9/18/1995	Foer, Jonathan Safran	10/10/2005
Buckley, Christopher	9/25/2006	Ford, Richard	2/18/2002
Burke, James	3/12/2001	French, Albert	10/18/1993
Byatt, A.S.	3/7/2005	Friedan, Betty	10/4/1993
Caputo, Philip	12/2/1991	Fuentes, Carlos	11/18/1996
Carey, Peter	3/15/2004	Garrett, Laurie	3/1/2004
Carville, James	11/30/1998	Gates Jr., Henry Louis	3/7/1994
Chabon, Michael	3/26/2001, 2/5/2007, 5/11/2026	Gawande, Atul	2/7/2005
Chavez, Denise	2/19/2001	Gay, Roxane	3/6/2017
Chernow, Ron	12/3/1993, 10/30/2017	Gellman, Rabbi Marc	1/22/2001
Child, Lee	12/6/2010	Gergen, David	9/11/2000
Choi, Susan	9/14/2020	Gilbert, Elizabeth	9/21/2009, 9/29/2025
Coates, Ta-Nehisi	12/7/2020	Gilbert, Martin	10/28/1991, 11/4/1996
		Gilligan, Carol	11/10/2003
		Gjelten, Tom	1/23/1995
		Golden, Arthur	1/23/2006

Goodall, Jane	4/1/1996	Lamott, Anne	3/11/2002	Orringer, Julie	11/22/2021	Stern, Isaac	11/8/1999
Goodwin, Doris Kearns	4/5/1993, 10/29/2019	Lawrence-Lightfoot, Sara	1/22/1996	Ossana, Diana	9/24/1994	Stevenson, Bryan	1/25/2016
Gordon, Mary	3/23/1992	Leavitt, David	1/24/1994	Ozeki, Ruth	3/13/2023	Strout, Elizabeth	12/5/2016
Gould, Stephen Jay	3/3/1997	Lee, Min Jin	4/1/2019	Pamuk, Orhan	10/8/2007	Stuart, Douglas	1/24/2022
Gray, Spalding	4/2/2001	Lepore, Jill	1/14/2019, 9/15/2025	Paretsky, Sara	2/18/2008	Styron, William	9/19/1993
Greene, Brian	4/4/2005, 11/23/2020	Lessing, Doris	10/26/1994	Parks, Suzan-Lori	2/6/2006	Tan, Amy	10/20/1992
Greider, William	2/3/1997	Lin, Maya	2/26/1996	Patchett, Ann	10/22/2007, 10/7/2016	Tannen, Deborah	3/19/2007
Groff, Lauren	2/20/2017	Lively, Penelope	9/29/1996	Patterson, James	12/8/2003	Terkel, Studs	1/10/1994
Gross, Linda	1/20/1992	Lockwood, Patricia	2/20/2023	Pearl, Mariane	2/21/2005	Theroux, Paul	10/19/2009
Gurnah, Abdulrazak	9/15/2022	Lopez, Barry	3/25/1996, 2/8/2010	Pepin, Jacques	12/4/2006	Thurrow, Lester	2/9/2004
Gyasi, Yaa	12/6/2021	Love, Susan	2/24/1997	Philbrick, Nathaniel	11/19/2007	Tobar, Hector	9/21/2015
Halberstam, David	1/10/2000	Luiselli, Valeria	3/11/2019	Pinker, Steven	10/7/2002	Tobias, Andrew	11/10/1997
Hamid, Mohsin	3/26/2018	Macaulay, David	4/5/1999, 11/17/2008	Plimpton, George	3/1/1993, 9/27/1999	Tóibín, Colm	9/16/2024
Hamill, Pete	1/27/2003	Macdonald, Helen	1/30/2017	Pollan, Michael	3/5/2007	Totenberg, Nina	10/24/2005
Harjo, Joy	3/27/2023	Machado, Carmen Maria	1/20/2020	Potok, Chaim	11/8/1999	Treuer, David	1/18/2021
Hartman, Msgr Thomas	1/22/2001	Macy, Beth	12/8/2025	Powers, Richard	12/9/2019	Trillin, Calvin	9/14/1998
Hiaasen, Carl	10/16/2000	Maguire, Gregory	4/5/2010	Prose, Francine	4/3/2000	Turow, Scott	12/9/1996, 10/13/2003
Hillerman, Tony	11/2/1998	Mailer, Norman	11/12/1991	Quindlen, Anna	9/30/2002	Updike, John	3/15/1999
Hoffman, Alice	1/22/2007	Makkai, Rebecca	12/11/2023	Rakoff, David	3/25/2002	Uris, Leon	9/15/1997
Hoving, Thomas	12/7/1992	Mandel, Emily St John	2/15/2016	Rehm, Diane	11/14/2016	Urrea, Luis Alberto	10/8/2018
Hylton, Antonia	9/10/2025	Martel, Yann	3/21/2011	Reich, Robert	10/22/2001	Vergheese, Abraham	11/13/2023
Irving, John	10/25/2004	Mason, Bobbie Ann	1/13/2003	Reichl, Ruth	10/26/2015	von Hoffman, Nicholas	2/1/1993
Isaacson, Walter	11/25/2003	Mattheissen, Peter	4/10/1995	Richardson, Heather Cox	10/28/2024	Vonnegut, Kurt	3/2/1992
Isenberg, Nancy	9/25/2017	Mayes, Frances	10/30/2000	Roberts, Cokie	11/8/1993	Vowell, Sarah	3/25/2002
Ishiguro, Kazuo	10/9/1995	McBride, James	11/4/2002	Rodriguez, Richard	1/11/1993	Vuong, Ocean	3/22/2021
Ivins, Molly	5/4/1992, 1/14/2002	McCourt, Frank	3/29/1999, 3/6/2006	Russell, Karen	2/22/2021	Walcott, Derek	10/19/1998
Iyer, Pico	9/30/2024	McCullough, David	6/22/1992	Russo, Richard	10/20/2008, 11/20/2017	Waldman, Ayelet	2/5/2007
Jaffrey, Madhur	11/1/2010	McMillan, Terry	6/8/1992	Rybczynski, Witold	2/6/1995	Walker, Alice	3/24/1997
Jones, Judith	4/6/2009	McMurtry, Larry	9/25/1994	Sapolsky, Robert	3/20/2006	Walker, Jess	10/27/2025
Jones, Tayari	11/19/2018	Millard, Candice	10/24/2022	Sapphire	2/7/2011	Ward, Jesmyn	5/13/2024
Jong, Erica	11/16/1998	Miller, Arthur	3/1/1999, 10/8/2001	Satrapi, Marjane	10/27/2003	Wasserstein, Wendy	1/12/1998
Karr, Mary	10/4/2010	Miller, Madeline	11/11/2019	Saunders, George	3/30/2009	Watson, James	2/4/2002
Keefe, Patrick Radden	12/12/2022	Miller, Sue	11/19/2001	Schama, Simon	3/21/2022	Weil, Andrew	12/5/2005
Keillor, Garrison	12/1/1997, 9/29/2003	Min, Anchee	4/23/2003	Schieffer, Bob	3/21/2022	Weldon, Fay	4/6/1998
Kendi, Ibram X	10/14/2019	Mitchell, David	11/2/2015	Schiff, Stacy	1/8/1996	Whitehead, Colson	2/19/2007, 10/24/2016
Kennedy, William	1/6/1992	Momaday, N. Scott	4/8/2002	Schlösser, Eric	12/6/2004	Wideman, John Edgar	10/18/1993
Kerry, Sen. John	10/5/1997	Moore, Lorrie	10/5/2009	Schorr, Daniel	4/4/2011	Wiesel, Elie	10/18/1993
Keyes, Alan	11/29/1999	Mortimer, John	3/20/1995	Sebold, Alice	9/26/2005	Wilkerson, Isabel	12/13/1995
Kidd, Sue Monk	4/10/2006	Moshfegh, Ottessa	2/19/2019	Sedaris, David	2/1/1999	Will, George	5/9/2022
Kidder, Tracy	2/21/2011, 3/25/2024	Mosley, Watler	11/20/2000	Shaara, Jeff	10/27/2003	Williams, Terry Tempest	9/16/1996
Kimmerer, Robin Wall	4/11/2022	Mukherjee, Siddhartha	9/26/2016	Sheehy, Gail	10/18/1999, 4/2/2007		11/8/2004, 10/12/2020, 5/12/2025
Kincaid, Jamaica	11/24/1997	Nafisi, Azar	9/24/2007	Sheldrake, Merlin	11/13/2006	Wills, Garry	5/12/2025
King, Lily	11/16/2020	Nguyen, Viet Thanh	4/9/2018	Shields, Carol	4/20/1992	Wilson, Garry	11/1/1999
King, Stephen	3/11/1996	Niffenegger, Audrey	3/22/2010	Shortz, Will	4/13/2026	Wilson, August	3/20/2000
Kingsolver, Barbara	11/6/1995	Nordan, Lewis	1/13/1997	Simon, Neil	10/5/1998	Wilson, Edward O.	3/30/1998
Kingston, Maxine Hong	2/23/2004	Nunez, Sigrid	9/23/2019	Simon, Scott	12/1/2008	Wofford, Harris	10/4/1992
Koestenbaum, Wayne	1/13/2003	Oates, Joyce Carol	11/11/1992, 9/24/2018	Smiley, Jane	10/7/1996	Wolf, Naomi	2/2/2001
Kolbert, Elizabeth	3/3/2008, 11/16/2015, 5/12/2025	O'Brien, Edna	5/26/1992	Smith, Alexander McCall	3/17/2008	Wolfe, Tom	10/20/1997, 11/2/2009
Kozol, Jonathan	11/7/1994	O'Farrell, Maggie	11/22/2021	Smith, Anna Deavere	3/9/1998	Wolff, Tobias	10/11/2004
Kuang, R.F.	4/28/2025	Okri, Ben	11/23/1993	Smith, Clint	11/7/2005	Woodward, Bob	10/11/2004
Kushner, Rabbi Harold	12/3/2001	Ologboni, Tejoula (TEJU)	1/20/1992	Smith, Patti	1/11/1999	Woodward, Bob	12/4/2000
Lahiri, Jhumpa	11/20/2006	Ondaatje, Michael	4/6/2020	Smith, Zadie	11/7/2022	Wright, Lawrence	11/8/2021
Lakshmi, Padma	3/31/2026	Orange, Tommy	2/10/2020	Sobel, Dava	10/10/2016	Yamanaka, Lois-Ann	2/19/2001
Lalami, Laila	10/26/2020	Orlean, Susan	10/9/2006	Solomon, Andrew	9/18/2023	Yanagihara, Hanya	5/8/2023
		O'Rourke, P.J.	9/27/2004	Sontag, Susan	11/21/2005	Yong, Ed	4/29/2024
				Sorkin, Andrew Ross	12/7/2015	Young, Damon	12/7/2020
				Steinem, Gloria	9/21/1992	Yu, Charles	10/18/2021
					11/15/2010	Zakaria, Fareed	2/10/2003
					10/4/1999		

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Marley Dias Oct. 1, 2026



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Erin Entrada Kelly Nov. 12, 2026



The Second Life of Snap is a gripping, stand-alone, thematically rich survival story by two-time Newbery Medalist Erin Entrada Kelly, for fans of *The Wild Robot* and *A Rover's Story*.

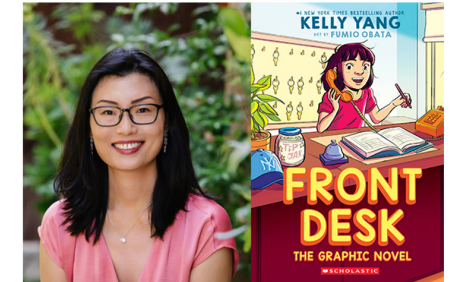
Sean Qualls Feb. 25, 2027



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Kelly Yang Oct. 22, 2026



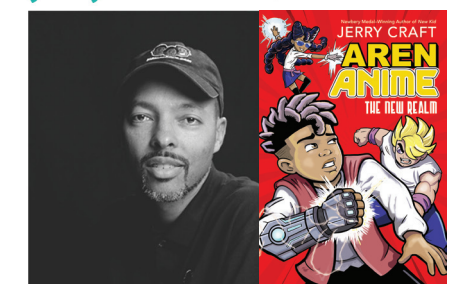
Kelly Yang's New York Times-bestselling book *Front Desk* is now a graphic novel, and this beautifully illustrated modern classic highlight's Mia Tang's ever-relevant immigrant story.

Elizabeth Acevedo Dec. 3, 2026



From National Book Award-winning, *New York Times*-bestselling author and renowned poet Elizabeth Acevedo comes a white-knuckle journey to self-understanding and doing the right thing, no matter the cost.

Jerry Craft Mar. 9, 2027



Jerry Craft is the author-illustrator of #1 *New York Times* bestselling graphic novel *New Kid*, the first book in history to win the Newbery Medal, the Coretta Scott King Author Award, and the Kirkus Prize for Young Readers' Literature.

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