



Kweli

Sixth Annual

Color *of*
Children's Literature
Conference

April 10–11, 2021 | Hosted by Zoom

Co-sponsored by

BCRW

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PULITZER PRIZE WINNERS

EDGAR AWARD WINNERS

ROBERT F. SIBERT HONOR

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT
AWARD WINNERS

THESKIMM BOOK CLUB PICKS

O MAGAZINE PICKS

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GOLDEN LAUREL WINNERS

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PATRISSE CULLORS



For our submission guidelines, please visit VictoriaSanders.com

SCHEDULE *at a glance*

Saturday, April 10, 2021

9 – 9:45 AM Welcome by Laura Pegram & Opening Keynote by Angeline Boulley

	A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track	B. Novels/Memoir Track	C. Illustrated Books & Nonfiction Track	D. Intensive Track
10 – 10:45 AM	Ours for the Making	Writing Social Justice	Worth a Thousand Words: Unlocking the Power of Picture Books	
11 – 11:45 AM	Tips on Crafting a Short Story for an Anthology	First Pages Clinic: Voice and Audience	Storyboard That!	11 – 12:30 PM The Five Principles of a Satisfying Picture Book INTENSIVE
12 – 12:45 PM	Critical Literacy	Love As Revolution	Hidden Figures: Picture Book Biographies	

12:45 – 1:15 PM Break for Lunch

1:15 PM Zoom Check-In

1:30-2:15 PM Generative Writing Workshop

2:30 – 3:15 PM	Chapter Books & Early Readers	Mining Deep	What to Expect: The Author/Agent/Editor Relationship	2:30 – 4 PM Nontraditional Ways to Structure a Novel INTENSIVE
3:30 – 4:15 PM	What I Wish I Knew Before My Debut	Historical Fiction	First Look Clinic: Picture Book & Graphic Novel Art & Text	
4:30 – 5:15 PM	Reimagine			

5:30 – 6 PM Closing Keynote by Safia Elhillo

6:15 PM Closing Notes

SCHEDULE *at a glance*

Sunday, April 11, 2021

9:15 AM - 9:45 AM SELF CARE: Nadia Owusu in Conversation with Sarah Choi

10 – 10:30 AM	EDITOR/AGENT ROUNDTABLES			D. ASK ME ANYTHING on Scene Building
	A. Rosemary Brosnan & Wendi Gu	B. Saba Sulaiman & Trisha de Guzman	C. Stefanie Sanchez Von Borstel & Weslie Turner	
10:45 – 11:15 AM	EDITOR/AGENT ROUNDTABLES			D. ASK ME ANYTHING on Voice
	A. Rosemary Brosnan & Wendi Gu	B. Saba Sulaiman & Trisha de Guzman	C. Stefanie Sanchez Von Borstel & Weslie Turner	
11:30 AM – 12:30 PM	A. ROUNDTABLE: Graphic Novel	B. ROUNDTABLE: Business & Contracts 101	C. ROUNDTABLE: Marketing & Publicity	D. ASK ME ANYTHING on Writing and Illustrating

12:45–1:15 PM BREAK FOR LUNCH

1:30–2:30 PM CLOSING KEYNOTE: Meg Medina and Jerry Craft in Conversation with Ibi Zoboi

2:30-2:45 PM IT'S A WRAP

Welcome to the

2021 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.

GENERAL INFORMATION

SOCIAL MEDIA

The official conference hashtag is #Kweli21VIRTUAL. 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 #Kweli21VIRTUAL faculty/attendee books from our official conference bookseller Word Up Community Bookshop. Kweli will receive a percentage of all sales through these pages. 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

These will take via video or via phone. Please be ready to go five minutes before your assigned consultation time. Consultations will last fifteen minutes. Remember that your editor or agent may have a number of critiques during the day. Please depart your session promptly so they can stay on schedule. For excellent advice on how to handle consultations and the feedback you get from them, check out lindasuepark.com/writing/critique.html.

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 in any form of conference

attendees or presenters. 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

Rachelle Ashour

Noni Carter

Sarah K. Choi

Susan Muaddi Darraj

Arely Guzmán

Leah Henderson

Cheryl Willis Hudson

Iwalani Kim

Minh Lê

Veronica Liu

Emeline Lee

Nadia Misir

Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich

Clem Richardson

Sana Zaidi

Abhi Alwar, Graphic Designer

SAVE THE DATE! #KWELI22 will happen April 2nd, 2022.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Saturday, April 10, 2021

9 – 9:45 AM WELCOME BY LAURA PEGRAM &
KEYNOTE BY ANGELINE BOULLEY

10 – 10:45 AM

A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track

SOLIDARITY: OURS FOR THE MAKING Panelists will discuss solidarity between marginalized groups and how it can feed the art and craft of storytelling. **Featuring:** Jennifer N. Baker, Mike Jung, Sheba Karim & Ibi Zoboi; **moderated by** Joanna Ho

B. Novels/Memoir Track

WRITING SOCIAL JUSTICE Individual stories can challenge outmoded stereotypes and myths and break down the idea of “the monolith.” In this panel, four esteemed authors and one seasoned editor will discuss art which centers social justice. **Featuring:** Angeline Boulley, Mahogany L. Browne, Aida Salazar & Jasmine Warga; **moderated by** Cheryl Hudson

C. Illustrated Books & Nonfiction Track

WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS: UNLOCKING THE POWER OF PICTURE BOOKS Just because picture books are targeted toward a young audience doesn't mean they are “simple.” Join these critically-acclaimed picture book creators as they discuss the power of picture books and how they use the art of visual storytelling to share complex, meaningful, and culturally-relevant stories with readers of all ages. **Featuring:** Michaela Goade, Rajani LaRocca, Daria Peoples-Riley, NoNieqa Ramos & Tasha Spillett; **moderated by** Minh Lê

11 – 11:45 AM

A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track

TIPS ON CRAFTING A SHORT STORY FOR AN

ANTHOLOGY Reflections on the short story as a literary form and gateway to craft experimentation, on how anthologies are crafted and their qualities as well as advice for aspiring and up-and-coming short story writers. **Featuring:** Christine Day, Olugbemisola Rhuday Perkovich, Renée Watson & Brian Young; **moderated by** Cynthia Leitich Smith

B. Novels/Memoir Track

FIRST PAGES CLINIC: VOICE AND AUDIENCE

Writers often struggle with questions of voice and audience. As editors, we have found that a rather wordy picture book manuscript, for example, might actually be more fitting for a middle grade audience if the author did X, Y and Z. In this session, editors will give direct X, Y and Z feedback on the first 250 words of a submission. They will be selected at random from attendees' previously submitted materials and shared on screen for all to read. **Featuring:** Joanna Cárdenas, Zareen Jaffery, Weslie Turner, Jennifer Ung & Phoebe Yeh; **moderated by** Arelly Guzmán

C. Illustrated Books & Nonfiction Track

STORYBOARD THAT! Panelists will discuss their storyboarding process and share storyboards from their picture books and/or graphic novels. **Featuring:** Floyd Cooper, David Bowles, Javaka Steptoe, Cozbi A. Cabrera & Shing Yin Khor; **moderated by** Michaela Goade

11 AM – 12:30 PM

D. Intensives Track

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF A SATISFYING PICTURE

BOOK A satisfying picture book results from the intimate interplay of five powerful principles: Concept, Form, Arc, Structure, and Sound. In this workshop, we'll discuss these foundational ideas in depth, examine several published picture books to see how they develop these principles, and consider some places where participants' manuscripts may need revision, reconception, or further growth. **Facilitated by** Cheryl Klein

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Saturday, April 10, 2021

12 – 12:45 PM

A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track

CRITICAL LITERACY Text not only shapes our reading habits but, it also contextualizes and subverts our identities and world views. Critical literacy is a tool that informs readers how they are being positioned by providing them with mechanism that identifies expressions of power, privilege and oppression. This program explores the ways in which critical literacy is used to evaluate and analyze youth literature today. **Facilitated by Edi Campbell**

B. Novels/Memoir Track

LOVE AS REVOLUTION “Loving oneself is one way to start the revolution,” said award-winning author Renée Watson, “and self love is actually radical love.” Three panelists will lean into radical love and activism during this timely discussion. **Featuring:** Sheba Karim, Misa Suguira & Renée Watson; **moderated by** Liara Tamani

C. Illustrated Books & Nonfiction Track

HIDDEN FIGURES: PICTURE BOOK BIOGRAPHIES

Authors will share their approach to telling the true stories of Zora Neale Hurston, “the extraordinary folklorist and novelist extraordinaire who changed the face of American literature”; Philip G. Freelon, the architect devoted to the Black experience; Fauja Singh, “the first 100-year-old to run a marathon;” and the Black Wall Street community in Tulsa, Oklahoma. **Featuring:** Carole Boston Weatherford, Simran Jeet Singh, Kelly Starling Lyons & Alicia Williams **moderated by** Rio Cortez

12:45 – 1:15 PM BREAK FOR LUNCH

1:30 – 2:15 PM GENERATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP

2:30 – 3:15 PM

A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track

CHAPTER BOOKS & EARLY READERS A good chapter book has “easy-on-the-eyes design, heavy use of illustrations, and a focus on universal themes.” Five authors will discuss how to create engaging chapter books for readers who are transitioning from picture books to novels, from craft considerations like voice and plot, to how to think about series potential. **Featuring** Derrick Barnes, Susan Muaddi Darraj, Christine Day, J. Dillard & Saadia Faruqi **moderated by** Monica Brown

B. Novels/Memoir Track

MINING DEEP Panelists discuss how the research for their book took them from a ghostly ocean to an alternate colonial Mexico in the year 1865 and what they discovered about themselves and their characters during the process. At the end of the panel, the authors will leave the audience with five takeaways on research and writing. **Featuring:** Graham Akhurst, Carole Boston Weatherford, David Bowles, Brandy Colbert & Darcie Little Badger **moderated by** Laura Pegram

C. Illustrated Books & Nonfiction Track

WHAT TO EXPECT: THE AUTHOR/AGENT/EDITOR

RELATIONSHIP Join top industry professionals in a panel discussion where they will cover different aspects of the author-agent-editor relationship. **Featuring:** Leah Henderson, Clelia Gore, Denene Millner & Cozbi A. Cabrera **moderated by** Joanna Cárdenas

2:30 – 4 PM

D. Intensives Track

NONTRADITIONAL WAYS TO STRUCTURE A NOVEL WITH OLUGBEMISOLA RHUDAY PERKOVICH & LAMAR GILES

This conversation will explore how our “cultural locations” influence our understanding of the “right” way to tell a story, and empower writers to consider some of the many ways to play with our work.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Saturday, April 10, 2021

3:30 – 4:15 PM

A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track

WHAT I WISH I KNEW BEFORE MY DEBUT Authors discuss all the things they wish they knew before their debut, from how to manage your expectations, to keeping track of boundaries in a virtual world. **Featuring:** Derrick Barnes, Jennifer DeLeon, Leah Henderson & Darcie Little Badger **moderated by** Sheetal Sheth

B. Novels/Memoir Track

HISTORICAL FICTION Histories reimagined in timeless works of fiction. From *A Sitting in St. James* which explores the interwoven lives of those bound to a Louisiana plantation in antebellum America to *The Legend of Auntie Po*, where “thirteen-year-old Mei reimagines the myths of Paul Bunyan as starring a Chinese heroine while she works in a Sierra Nevada logging camp in 1885.” **Featuring:** Brandy Colbert, Veera Hiranandani, Aida Salazar, Shing Yin Khor & Rita Williams Garcia; **moderated by** Carole Boston Weatherford

C. Illustrated Books & Nonfiction Track

FIRST LOOK CLINIC: PICTURE BOOK & GRAPHIC

NOVEL ART & TEXT In this largely “illustrative” version of First Pages, a distinguished panel of author/ illustrators will look at illustrations & snippets of text for picture books and graphic novels, and offer advice on improving and publishing your work. Attendees must have submitted their work ahead of the conference. **Featuring:** Tasha Spillett, Juana Martinez-Neal, Daria Peoples-Riley, Jess X. Snow & Javaka Steptoe; **moderated by** Connie Hsu

4:30 – 5:15 PM

A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track

REIMAGINE Reimagine a publishing industry defined by a truly inclusive community of creatives who are crafting their own beautifully authentic stories. **Featuring:** Cynthia Leitich Smith, Denene Millner, Christopher Myers & Namrata Tripathi; **moderated by** Zareen Jaffrey

5:30 – 6 PM

KEYNOTE BY SAFIA ELHILLO

6:15 – 6:30 PM

CLOSING NOTES

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Sunday, April 11, 2021

9:15 - 9:45 AM SELF CARE: NADIA OWUSU IN CONVERSATION WITH SARAH CHOI

10 - 10:40 AM EDITOR / AGENT ROUNDTABLES

- A. **Jennifer Ung** (Executive Editor at Quill Tree Books/ HarperCollins) & **Wendi Gu** (Literary Agent at Sanford J. Greenburger Associates)
- B. **Saba Sulaiman** (Literary Agent at Talcott Notch) & **Trisha de Guzman** (Associate Editor at Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Macmillan)
- C. **Stefanie Sanchez Von Borstel** (Literary Agent & Co-founder, Full Circle Literary) & **Weslie Turner** (Senior Editor at the Versify, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)

10 - 10:45 AM

- D. **ASK ME ANYTHING ON SCENE BUILDING**
Angeline Bouley (author of *Firekeeper's Daughter*),
Serene Hakim (Agent, Ayesha-Pande Literary) & **Nick Thomas** (Senior Editor at Levine Querido)

10:45 - 11:15 AM EDITOR / AGENT ROUNDTABLES

- A. **Jennifer Ung** (Executive Editor at Quill Tree Books/ HarperCollins) & **Wendi Gu** (Literary Agent at Sanford J. Greenburger Associates)
- B. **Saba Sulaiman** (Literary Agent at Talcott Notch) & **Trisha de Guzman** (Associate Editor at Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Macmillan)
- C. **Stefanie Sanchez Von Borstel** (Literary Agent & Co-founder, Full Circle Literary) & **Weslie Turner** (Senior Editor at the Versify, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)

10:45 AM - 11:30 AM

- D. **ASK ME ANYTHING ON VOICE**
Arely Guzmán (editor at Make Me a World),
Arthur Levine (President and Editor-in-Chief of Levine Querido), moderated by **Leah Henderson** (author of *A Day to Remember*)

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

- A. **GRAPHIC NOVEL ROUNDTABLE**
Stacy Whitman (Founder and publisher of Tu Books)
& **Whitney Leopard** (Senior Editor, Random House Graphic)
- B. **BUSINESS & CONTRACTS 101 ROUNDTABLE:**
Cheryl Klein (Editorial Director at Lee & Low Books)
- C. **MARKETING & PUBLICITY ROUNDTABLE**
Antonio Gonzalez Cerna (Marketing Director at Levine Querido)

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

- D. **ASK ME ANYTHING ON WRITING AND ILLUSTRATING**
Juana Martinez Neal (Author-Illustrator of *Alma and How She Got Her Name* AND *Zonia's Rain Forest*, Illustrator of *Fry Bread*), **Jess X. Snow** (Illustrator of *Black Girl Magic* and *The Ocean Calls*), **Alicia Williams** (Author of *Jump at the Sun: The True Life Tale of Unstoppable Storycatcher Zora Neale Hurston*) & **Connie Hsu** (Executive Editor at Roaring Brook Press at Macmillan Publishing)

12:45 - 1 PM LUNCH

1:30 - 2:15 PM CLOSING KEYNOTE:
MEG MEDINA AND JERRY CRAFT IN CONVERSATION WITH IBI ZOBI

2:30 - 2:45 PM IT'S A WRAP

Kweli

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Writers House LLC



ABRAMS



PUBLISHING PROFESSIONALS



ARELY GUZMÁN *Editorial Assistant, Penguin Random House*
she/they

Arely Guzmán is an editorial assistant at Knopf Books for Young Readers and Make Me a World. She earned her MFA in creative writing with a focus on nonfiction from Columbia University. Arely grew up in the Tijuana/San Diego border, reading as many books—in English and Spanish alike—as she could get a hold on. She is particularly interested in books that explore navigating in-betweenness and

intersectional identities.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): None, but open to submissions

Next Book to Watch For: **Diverse Book/Author to Recommend:** *Felix Ever After* by Kacen Callender

Seeking: Picture book manuscripts, Middle-grade, Young adult, Illustration portfolios



ARTHUR A. LEVINE *President, Editor-in-Chief, Levine Querido*
he/him/his | levinequerido.com
@Arthalevine1

Arthur A. Levine is the President and Editor-in-Chief of Levine Querido, a new independent publisher dedicated to finding and publishing brilliantly illustrated and written books from a diverse spectrum of creators across the United States and around the world. Throughout his career he has been identified with the editing and publishing of

such world-renowned authors as Alaya Dawn Johnson, Daniel Nayeri, Emma Donoghue, Shaun Tan and others. He is proud of a career-long commitment to inclusion and representation, publishing such great writers and illustrators as Lisa Yee, Dan Santat, Quiara Hudes, Francisco Stork, Eric Gansworth, Gary Soto, Sarah Moon and many others.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Shy Willow* by Cat Min

Next Book to Watch For: *Mighty Inside* by Sundee Frazier (October 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *No Other World* by Rahul Mehta

Seeking: Picture book manuscripts, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Nonfiction, Realistic contemporary, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Mystery, Romance, Historical, Rhyming text/Poetry, Short stories, Graphic novels, Illustration portfolios

To Submit: Our guidelines are on our website, and we are open to submissions. For those who want to reach me in particular, include the words Kweli/Arthur in the subject line and address to Meghanmaria@levinequerido.com



CHERYL WILLIS HUDSON *Editorial Director, Just Us Books*
she/her/hers | cherylwillishudson.com | JustUsBooks.com
/cherylwillishudson

Cheryl Willis Hudson is publisher and editorial director of Just Us Books, Inc., an independent publishing company she founded with her husband Wade Hudson. It focuses on Black interest books for

young people. She has authored over 25 books for children including *AFRO-BETS ABC Book*, *Bright Eyes*, *Brown Skin, Hands Can*, *My Friend Maya Loves to Dance*, *Brave. Black. First. 50+ African American Women Who Changed the World* and *We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices*, which she co-edited with her husband Wade. A second anthology, *The Talk: Conversations About Race, Love & Truth*, was released in August 2020. *Recognize!: An Anthology Honoring and Amplifying Black Life*, co-edited with Wade, will be published in September, 2021 by Crown Books.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Papa's Free Day Party* by Marilyn Nelson, illustrated by Wayne Anthony Still published by JUB

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Mahogany L. Browne

Seeking: Middle-grade, Nonfiction



CHERYL KLEIN *Editorial Director, Lee & Low Books*
she/her/hers | leeandlow.com; cherylklein.com | @chavelaque

Cheryl Klein is the editorial director at Lee & Low Books. Some of the books she's edited include *Seven Golden Rings* by Rajani LaRocca, illustrated by Archana Sreenivasan; *Dream Builder* by Kelly Starling Lyons, illustrated by Laura Freeman; *When Aidan Became A Brother* by Kyle Lukoff, illustrated by Kaylani Juanita, winner of the Stonewall Award; *The Magnolia Sword: A Ballad Of Mulan* by Sherry Thomas; and the forthcoming *Miosotis Flores Never Forgets* by Hilda Eunice Burgos. Cheryl is also the author of *The Magic Words: Writing Great Books For Children And Young Adults* and four picture books.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *If I Were A Tree* by Andrea Zimmerman, illustrated by Jing Jing Tsong

Next Book to Watch For: As an author: *Hamsters Make Terrible Roommates*, illustrated by Abhi Alwar, Fall 2021

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Anything illustrated by Kaylani Juanita or Qin Leng is a wonder of character and detail.

Seeking: Picture book manuscripts, Picture book dummies, Nonfiction, Realistic contemporary, Historical, Rhyming text/Poetry, Illustration portfolios

To Submit: Creators may send one picture book manuscript of any genre or a proposal of no more than ten pages for a longer middle-grade or YA nonfiction work to CBKedit@gmail.com. Put KWELI 2021, your name, and the title in the subject line, and paste both a query-style cover letter and the text of the manuscript/proposal into the body of the e-mail. Do not send attachments.

PUBLISHING PROFESSIONALS



CLELIA GORE *Vice President,*
Martin Literary & Media Management
she/her/hers | martinlit.com
@MadmoiselleClel

Clelia is Vice President at Martin Literary & Media Management and Literary Manager for award-winning, best-selling and critically acclaimed fiction and nonfiction books for children and teenagers. A New Jersey native, Seattle transplant, current expat in Singapore, daughter of immigrants, and dual-passport holder, Clelia is fascinated by stories that

help young readers understand the intricacies of the world and broaden their perspectives. Her clients include Leah Henderson, author of *The Magic In Changing Your Stars*, Jessica Kensky and Patrick Downes, authors of bestselling and award-winning *Rescue & Jessica: A Life-Changing Friendship*, and Latinx Pitch co-founder and author Mariana Llanos. She tweets as @MadmoiselleClel and you can read more about her at martinlit.com.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Together We March* by Leah Henderson (Atheneum/S&S, January 2021)

Next Book to Watch For: *Stolen Science* by Ella Schwartz (Bloomsbury, August 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Kenard Pak

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

To Submit: Kweli participants can query me directly through Query Manager, make sure to check the "event" box to indicate that this is a conference submission. The link is: querymanager.com/query/1447



CONNIE HSU *Executive Editor,*
Roaring Brook Press / Macmillan
she/her/hers | [goodreads.com/review/list/123365003](https://www.goodreads.com/review/list/123365003) | @editorhsu

Connie Hsu is an executive editor at Roaring Brook Press at Macmillan Publishing, a founding member of the Children's Book Council Diversity Committee, and a member of the Brooklyn Book Festival Children's Planning Committee. Recent

books include *I Dream of Popo*, *Outside, Inside*, *Black Is a Rainbow Color*, and *Fry Bread*. Her authors include Vera Brosgol, Angela Dominguez, Shannon Hale, Pat Zietlow Miller, Dan Santat, Steve Sheinkin, and Tillie Walden. She was born in Taiwan, raised in Alabama, and now lives in Brooklyn.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Wisdom of Trees* by Lita Judge

Next Book to Watch For: *Big Apple Diaries* by Alyssa Bermudez (August 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Jasmine Toguchi series by Debbie Michiko Florence

Seeking: Picture book manuscripts, Picture book dummies, Graphic novels, Illustration portfolios

To Submit: I'm open to submissions for 1 month following the conference.



CYNTHIA LEITICH SMITH
Author-curator, Heartdrum /
HarperCollins Children's Books
she/her/hers
cynthialeitichsmith.com
@cynleitichsmith | @cynthialeitichsmith
/Cynthia-Leitich-Smith-47037004867/ |
youtube.com/user/CynthiaLeitichSmith

Cynthia Leitich Smith is the 2021 NSK Neustadt Laureate and a *New York Times* bestselling author of books for young readers, including *Hearts Unbroken*, which won the American Indian Library Association's Youth Literature Award. Her 2021 releases are the middle grade anthology *Ancestor Approved: Intertribal Stories for Kids* and novel *Sisters of the Neversea*.

She is also the author-curator of Heartdrum, a Native-focused imprint at HarperCollins Children's Books, and serves as the Katherine Paterson Inaugural Endowed Chair on the faculty of the MFA program in Writing for Children and Young Adults at Vermont College of Fine Arts. Cynthia is a citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and lives in Austin, Texas.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Ancestor Approved: Intertribal Stories for Kids*

Next Book to Watch For: *Sisters of the Neversea* (Jun 1, 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Twins* by Varian Johnson, illustrated by Shannon Wright

Seeking: Picture book manuscripts, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Nonfiction, Realistic contemporary, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Mystery, Historical, Rhyming text/Poetry, Short stories, Graphic novels

To Submit: Heartdrum is a Native-focused imprint of HarperCollins Children's Books, author-curated by Cynthia Leitich Smith and edited by Rosemary Brosnan.

Our focus is on Indigenous stories that reflect Native people whose Nations are located within the borders of what's now called the United States and Canada. In this, we are mindful and inclusive of intersectional identities and various modern settings.

We are open to considering picture book, chapter book, middle grade novel, and young adult novel manuscripts as well as middle grade and young adult nonfiction manuscripts, and both poetry and graphic novel formats. Writing that reflects young protagonists and/or youth-related topics are welcome.

Our emphasis will be on contemporary, near histories and/or futuristic works, including realistic fiction and genre fiction.

We invite Native writers and illustrators to reach out to Cynthia Leitich Smith for more information about the imprint and about the annual We Need Diverse Books Native Children's-YA Writing Workshop, supported by Heartdrum at HarperCollins Children's Books.

PUBLISHING PROFESSIONALS



DENENE MILLNER *Editorial Director of Denene Millner Books / Simon & Schuster*

she/her/hers | victoriasanders.com/authors/millner | @mybrownbaby

Denene Millner is the No. 1 *New York Times* bestselling author of 31 books, including *The Fresh Princess*, co-written with Will Smith, and "The Vow,"

the novel on which the Lifetime movie, *With This Ring*, was based. Denene also is editorial director of Denene Millner Books, a Simon & Schuster imprint that won Newbery and Caldecott honors and the Kirkus Prize for Children's Literature in its debut year. Denene also is co-host of Georgia Public Broadcasting's "A Seat at the Table," a talk show about black women, and host of "Speakeasy," a podcast that examines blackness. She has written for *NPR*, *Essence*, *Glamour* and *Women's Health*, among other publications.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Fresh Princess: Style Rules*

Next Book to Watch For: *The Beautiful Blood*, a novel scheduled to be released in 2022 via St. Martin's Press

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *In Search of Satisfaction* by J. California Cooper

Seeking: Picture book manuscripts, Illustration portfolios

To Submit: Denene Millner Books publishes books that celebrate the everyday humanity of Black children and families. Submissions can be works of fiction or nonfiction, from board book and picture book (newborn +) to young adult (protagonists 18 or under). Please note that we do not publish historical books or memoir; our focus is on books that highlight positive, well-rounded portrayals of Black children and families., stretching beyond slavery, the Civil Rights Movement and Black "firsts" and celebrity.

If you have a project that fits this description, please consider submitting your work according to the following guidelines (a literary agent is not necessary at this time):

- In the subject line of your email, please include the title and the format (picture book, middle grade, teen, etc.)
- In the body of the email, please include:
 - » The format (picture book, chapter book, novel), word count, and a short synopsis with plot and character descriptions.
 - » Publishing credits and/or any special background or skills that demonstrate your expertise with the subject matter.
 - » Your literary agent, if applicable.
- Attach your manuscript as a Word document, preferably in 12-point Times New Roman font, double spaced.



EDITH CAMPBELL *Associate Education Librarian, Cunningham Memorial Library at Indiana State University*

she/her/hers | crazyquiltedi.blog | @CrazyQuilts

Edith Campbell is an Associate Education Librarian in the Cunningham Memorial Library at Indiana State University. Edith is a founding member of

the We Are Kidlit Collective and of See What We See. She currently serves on the Advisory Board for *Booklist* and for the *Research on Diversity in Youth Literature Journal*. She's on the Executive Board of the Indiana State Literacy Association. In 2016, she served as a Faculty Fellow to the ISU Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence's Multicultural Curriculum Learning Community. Edith blogs to promote literacy and social justice in young adult literature at crazyquiltedi.blog.

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Tonya Bolden



JENNIFER BAKER *Senior Editor of Amistad Books / HarperCollins*

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

Jennifer Baker is a publishing professional, creator/host of the Minorities in Publishing podcast, and contributing editor to *Electric Literature*. In 2017, she received a 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 the editor of the all PoC-short story anthology *Everyday People: The Color Of Life* (Atria Books, 2018) and author of the upcoming YA novel *Forgive Me Not* (Putnam BFYR, 2022). She has volunteered with organizations such as We Need Diverse Books and I, Too Arts Collective.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Everyday People: The Color of Life—A Short Story Anthology*

Next Book to Watch For: *Forgive Me Not* (Summer 2022)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Samantha Mabry

PUBLISHING PROFESSIONALS



JENNIFER UNG *Executive Editor,*
Quill Tree Books / HarperCollins
she/her/hers | [@jenpanda](#)

Jennifer Ung is an Executive Editor at Quill Tree Books/HarperCollins. Her previous experience includes editing novels for kids and teens at Simon & Schuster, where she had the privilege of working with bestselling and award-winning authors such as Sandhya Menon, Akemi Dawn Bowman, Brittney Morris, Rachel Lynn Solomon, Gloria Chao, and Raquel Vasquez Gilliland. Jen is committed to

championing underrepresented voices across middle grade and young adult fiction, and is in particular drawn to joyful stories that explore extraordinary emotions and life-defining relationships. Find her on twitter [@jenpanda](#).

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Cost of Knowing* by Brittney Morris (4/6/21)

Next Book to Watch For: *Made in Korea* by Sarah Suk (5/18/21)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong

Seeking: Middle-grade, Young adult

To Submit: Open to submissions for conference attendees for 30 days after conference. Please send query and first ten pages to jennifer.ung@harpercollins.com with "Kweli conference submission" in the subject line.



JOANNA CÁRDENAS *Senior Editor,*
Kokila / Penguin Random House
she/her/hers | penguin.com/publishers/kokila
[@joannananamc](#)

Senior Editor Joanna Cárdenas has worked on such critically-acclaimed and award-winning books as *The First Rule of Punk* by Celia C. Pérez and *Stand Up Yumi Chung* by Jessica Kim. Joanna is also co-founder of the Representation Matters Mentor Program for aspiring editors of color. In 2015,

she was an honoree of *Publishers Weekly's* Star Watch, which identifies book publishing talent making waves in the industry. She is looking for books across age categories, genres, and formats that center joy, creativity, and imagination; explore our roles as global citizens; use comedy to deconstruct big life questions and events; and celebrate romantic and platonic love. Follow her on Twitter: [@joannananamc](#).

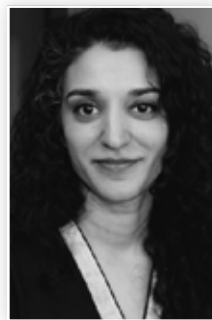
Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Ways to Make Sunshine* by Renée Watson

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Fatima's Great Outdoors* by Ambreen Tariq, illustrated by Stevie Lewis

Next Book to Watch For: *My Two Border Towns* by David Bowles, illustrated by Erika Meza (available in English and Spanish on August 24, 2021)

Seeking: Picture book manuscripts, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Realistic contemporary, Romance, Graphic novels

To Submit: Kokila is excited to hear from new voices and accepts unagented submissions that fit our mission from September 1st to December 1st of every year. The submissions email and guidelines are posted to our website during the window only. penguin.com/publishers/kokila/



NAMRATA TRIPATHI *VP & Publisher,*
Kokila / Penguin Young Readers
she/her/hers | penguin.com/publishers/kokila | [@Tweethathi](#)

Namrata Tripathi is Vice President and Publisher of Kokila, a new imprint at Penguin Young Readers dedicated to centering stories from the margins. She was born in the USSR, and lived in Afghanistan, India, Canada, Pakistan, Germany, and Poland before moving to New York in 1997.

Prior to launching Kokila, Tripathi edited many critically acclaimed, award-winning, and bestselling books, including *Islandborn*, for which illustrator Leo Espinosa received

a Pura Belpré Honor; John Corey Whaley's Printz Award-winning debut, *Where Things Come Back*; and Veera Hiranandani's *The Night Diary*, a 2019 Newbery Honor winner.

Seeking: Picture book manuscripts, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Nonfiction, Realistic contemporary, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Mystery, Romance, Historical, Rhyming text/Poetry, Short stories, Graphic novels, Illustration portfolios

To Submit: Kokila accepts submissions each year during our submissions window. Details can be found here: www.penguin.com/publishers/kokila



NICK THOMAS *Senior Editor,*
Levine Querido
he/him/his | levinequerido.com
[@LevineQuerido](#)

Nick Thomas is a Senior Editor with Levine Querido. Previously, he was Senior Editor at Arthur A. Levine Books, where he started as an Editorial Assistant. He has also held positions with Bloomsbury, Chicken House, and David Fickling Books before returning to his AALB roots. He edits middle grade and young adult books, and

looks for stories that change something about you by the time you're finished.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Apple (Skin to the Core)* by Eric Gansworth

Next Book to Watch For: *Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask (Young Readers Edition)*, by Anton Treuer

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Flyboy in the Buttermilk*, by Greg Tate

Seeking: Picture book manuscripts, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Nonfiction, Realistic contemporary, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Mystery, Romance, Historical, Rhyming text/Poetry, Short stories, Graphic novels, Illustration portfolios

To Submit: Submit directly to nick@levinequerido.com with "Kweli" in email subject.

PUBLISHING PROFESSIONALS



PHOEBE YEH VP/Publisher, *Crown Books for Young Readers / Random House Children's Books*
she/her/hers

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 Midnights* (Lincoln Peirce), *Dear Justyce* and debut novels *Dear Martin* and *Clean Getaway* (Nic Stone); YA anthology, *Once Upon a Universe* in partnership with We Need Diverse Books; *The Talk: Conversations About Race, Love & Truth* edited by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson; debut tween novel *Isaiah Dunn is My Hero* (Kelly J. Baptist), a BEA MG BOOK BUZZ selection; debut YA verse novel *Chlorine Sky* (Mahogany L. Browne), a Bookriot and Bustle Best of title; *Sprouting Wings: The True Story of James Herman Banning*, *The First African American Pilot to Fly Across the United States* (Louisa Jagger & Shari Becker/Floyd Cooper) and the Fairy Science picture books (Ashley Spires). She is a recipient of the inaugural CBC Diversity Outstanding Achievement Award.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Chlorine Sky* by Mahogany L. Browne

Next Book to Watch For: *Down To Earth* by Betty Culley (5/25/2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *We Belong* by Cookie Hiponia Everman (3/30/2021)

Seeking: Picture book manuscripts, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Nonfiction, Realistic contemporary, Graphic novels, Illustration portfolios

To Submit: Authors can submit queries/submissions to me at pyeh@penguinrandomhouse.com. Please put KWELI 2021 in Subject header.



SABA SULAIMAN Agent, *Talcott Notch Literary Services*
she/her/hers | talcottnotch.net;
sabasulaiman.com | [@agentsaba](https://twitter.com/agentsaba)

Saba Sulaiman is an agent at Talcott Notch Literary Services, a boutique agency located in Milford, CT. She holds a BA in Economics and Middle Eastern Studies from Wellesley College and an MA from the University of Chicago, where she studied modern Persian literature. Being an immigrant who is constantly negotiating her own identity and sense of

belonging in a place she now calls "home," she is committed to championing books by writers from marginalized communities with compelling stories to tell; stories that demonstrate the true range of emotions and perspectives that exist in this world, and address urgent and often underexplored issues in both fiction and non-fiction with veracity, heart, and preferably a dash of humor.

Seeking: Picture book manuscripts, Middle-grade, Young adult, Nonfiction, Realistic contemporary, Mystery, Romance

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Laxmi's Mooch* by Shelly Anand, Illustrated by Nabi Ali (PRH/Kokila)

Next Book to Watch For: *Too Bright To See* by Kyle Lukoff (April 20, 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Veera Hiranandani

To Submit: Please send me a short (no longer than a page) query, along with the first ten pages of your manuscript included within the email, and please include the phrase "KWELI conference" in the subject line.



SERENE HAKIM Literary Agent,
Ayesha Pande Literary
she/her/hers | pandeliterary.com
[@serenemaria](https://twitter.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): *Mostly Dead Things* by Kristen Arnett (June 2019) **Next Book to Watch For:** *Cece Rios and the Desert of Souls* by Kaela Rivera (April 13, 2021)

Seeking: Middle-grade, Young adult, Nonfiction, Realistic contemporary, Short stories

To Submit: Please use our website to submit: pandeliterary.com/queries-pandeliterary



STACY WHITMAN Publisher, *Tu Books / Lee & Low Books*
she/her/hers | leeandlow.com/imprints/tu-books
[@stacylwhitman](https://twitter.com/stacylwhitman), [@tubooks](https://twitter.com/tubooks), [@leeandlow](https://twitter.com/leeandlow)
[@leeandlow](https://www.instagram.com/leeandlow)

Stacy Whitman is the founder and publisher of Tu Books, the middle grade and YA imprint of Lee & Low Books. She founded the New Visions Award, which honors a new unpublished writer of color. She holds a master's degree in children's literature

from Simmons University.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Boy Everywhere* by A. M. Dassu

Next Book to Watch For: *Clockwork Curandera Vol. I: The Witch Owl Parliament* written by David Bowles and illustrated by Raúl the Third

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Banned Book Club* by Kim Hyun Sook and Ryan Estrada, illustrated by Hyung-Ju Ko

Seeking: Middle-grade, Young adult, Graphic novels

To Submit: Please consider entering the New Visions Award writing contest if you are unagented and have not published a middle grade or YA novel or graphic novel yet. For all other submissions, or if the New Visions Award submission window is closed: Email submissions to swhitman@leeandlow.com within 6 months with the subject CONFERENCE SUBMISSION. Novel submissions should be in a Word file, double spaced with standard margins and fonts, and include the first 3 chapters of the book, and a synopsis of the plot. Graphic novels should be 30-40 script pages and a synopsis, formatted in a standard script format. Don't forget your contact information on all manuscripts!

PUBLISHING PROFESSIONALS



STEFANIE SANCHEZ VON BORSTEL *Literary Agent & Co-founder, Full Circle Literary*
she/her/hers | fullcircleliterary.com | [@fullcirclelit](https://www.instagram.com/fullcirclelit)

Stefanie (she/ella) is co-founder of Full Circle Literary, a literary agency with a focus on discovering, developing, and advocating underrepresented creators of books and media. Full Circle represents a diverse and inclusive family of award-winning authors and artists whose works break barriers and stand the test of time. Some of the creators Stefanie represents include Monica Brown, Carmen Tafolla, Diana López, Celia C. Pérez, Jasmine Mendez, David Bowles, Rafael López, John Parra, Estelí Meza and Juana Martinez-Neal, to name a few. Prior to agenting, she worked in editorial, publicity and trade marketing for Penguin and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. A proud Tejana from San Antonio, Stefanie is now based in southern California. She is a board member of Latinx in Publishing. Follow her [@fullcirclelit](https://www.instagram.com/fullcirclelit) or visit fullcircleliterary.com

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Zonia's Rain Forest* and *La selva de Zonia* by Juana Martinez-Neal (Candlewick)

Next Book to Watch For: *Cuba in My Pocket* by Adrianna Cuevas (FSG/Macmillan, September 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *The Paper Kingdom* by Helena Ku Rhee

Seeking: Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Illustration portfolios

To Submit: Stefanie is open to submissions in the following categories only (Sept 2020): illustrators, graphic novels, middle grade fiction/nonfiction by diverse creators. Query her via Query Manager form <http://QueryMe.Online/StefanieFCL> or link on website fullcircleliterary.com



SYDNEE MONDAY *Assistant Editor, Kokila / Penguin Random House*
she/her/hers | penguin.com/publishers/kokila
[@SydneeMonday](https://www.instagram.com/SydneeMonday)

Sydnee Monday is an assistant editor at Kokila/Penguin Young Readers. She wants to read about under-celebrated BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and disabled figures in history and how we move towards utopia. A graduate of Howard University, she

mentors young people with Read Ahead and the Governor's Committee on Scholastic Achievement.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Cot in the Living Room* by Hilda Eunice Burgos; illustrated by Gaby D'Alessandro (pubs 6/1/21)

Seeking: Picture book manuscripts, Middle-grade, Young adult, Realistic contemporary, Historical, Rhyming text/Poetry

To Submit: 1 month after conference — query letter, synopsis, first 3 chapters for MG/YA + full MS for PB/poetry



TAMAR MAYS *Executive Editor, HarperCollins Children's Books*
she/her/hers | [@tamarmays](https://www.instagram.com/tamarmays)

Tamar edits picture books and the occasional special board book. Tamar also runs Harper's acclaimed I Can Read program, where she puts an emphasis on representation of marginalized voices. She is so proud that Kelly Starling Lyons and Nina Mata's title *Ty's Travels: Zip Zoom* won a Geisel Honor!

Other highlights include the Indie Next pick, *Dear Earth* by Erin Dealey, illustrated by Luisa Uribe; *Strong Voices*, from Tonya Bolden and Eric Velasquez; *Sharice's Big Voice* by US Congresswoman Sharice Davids, illustrated by Joshua Mangeshig Pawis-Steckley; and the *My Baby Loves* board book series by Jabari Asim and Tara Nicole Whitaker.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Sharice's Big Voice* by Sharice Davids with Nancy K. Mays, illustrated by Joshua Mangeshig Pawis-Steckley (on sale 6/1/2021)

Next Book to Watch For: *Ruby's Reunion Day Dinner* by Angela Dalton and Jostenia Southerland (Summer 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *The ABC's of Black History* by Rio Cortez and illustrated by Lauren Semmer

Seeking: Picture book manuscripts, Picture book dummies

To Submit: I will look at one work per person—no time limit. Put KWELI SUBMISSION in the subject line. Include Word document or low res PDF as an attachment (or a drop box link is fine). Please don't use wettransfer as the link may expire before I can look! Send email c/o.tamar.mays@harpercollins.com



TIFF LIAO *Senior Editor, Henry Holt Books for Young Readers / Macmillan*
she/her/hers | mackidsbooks.com/staff
[@tiff_liao](https://www.instagram.com/tiff_liao)

Tiff Liao is Senior Editor at Henry Holt Books for Young Readers. Some of her recent titles include the #1 *New York Times*-bestseller *Children of Blood and Bone* by Tomi Adeyemi and its bestselling sequel *Children of Virtue and Vengeance*, The Merciful Crow series by Margaret Owen, *A Game of Fox & Squirrels* by Jenn Reese, *I Am Perfectly Designed*

by "Queer Eye" star Karamo Brown and Jason Brown, and the upcoming *Firekeeper's Daughter* by Angeline Boulley. Prior to joining Holt, she was an editor at Penguin Young Readers.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Firekeeper's Daughter* by Angeline Boulley

Next Book to Watch For: *The Mary Shelley Club* by Goldy Moldavsky (4/13/21)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Grown* by Tiffany D. Jackson

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

To Submit: I'm open to one submission from each attendee, in the categories that I am acquiring. For picture books, please submit the full text as an attachment. For novels, please submit a synopsis and the first 25 pages as an attachment. Please e-mail tiffany.liao@macmillan.com.

PUBLISHING PROFESSIONALS



TRISHA DE GUZMAN *Associate Editor, Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers / Macmillan*

she/her/hers | trishadeguzman.com

[@trishadeg](#)

Trisha de Guzman is an Associate Editor at Farrar Straus Giroux Books for Young Readers, an imprint of Macmillan. Born in Manila, she has lived in New

York City since she was seven years old. She is actively building her list of picture books, middle grade and young adult novels, and select nonfiction books and graphic novels, with a particular focus on uplifting BIPOC voices.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *All You Knead is Love* by Tanya Guerrero

Next Book to Watch For: *Cuba in My Pocket* by Adrianna Cuevas

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Efren Divided* by Ernesto Cisneros

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

To Submit: Please send an email with the subject line KWELI 2021 Submission, with a 2-3 paragraph pitch of your project in the body of the email. For picture books, please attach the full ms as a Word document, and for novels (middle grade and YA), please attach the first 50 pages of your work as a Word document. I ask that you send only one project for submission.



VICTORIA SANDERS *Founder,*

Victoria Sanders & Associates

she/her/hers | www.victoriasanders.com

When I founded Victoria Sanders & Associates in 1992, it was the first step toward the culmination of a dream and a calling. Following my law school graduation, driven by a lifelong love affair with reading and books, I immersed myself in the world of publishing. I worked in the legal/contracts departments of Simon & Schuster, and at two literary agencies. It's been an incredibly exciting

journey, and one that keeps getting better. While representing a multicultural roster of internationally bestselling and award-winning authors, I endeavor to seek out and champion new and diverse voices and viewpoints. As a literary agent for these 25 years, I've taken great pride in having represented many of my clients for their entire careers. I am honored to work with the extraordinary group of visionary writers and thinkers who grace this agency, the publishing marketplace, and their devoted readers with their talent and artistry.

Seeking: Picture book manuscripts, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Nonfiction, Realistic contemporary, Mystery, Historical, Rhyming text/Poetry, Short stories, Graphic novels

To Submit: Authors who wish to contact Victoria Sanders & Associates regarding potential representation should send a query letter with the first three chapters (or about 25 pages) pasted into the body of the message to queriesvsa@gmail.com. We will only accept queries via email. Query letters should describe the project and the author in the body of a single, one-page email that does not contain any attached files. IMPORTANT NOTE: Please paste the first three chapters of your manuscript (or about 25 pages, and feel free to round up to a chapter break) into the body of your email. We generally respond to queries in one to four weeks, although occasionally it will take longer. We will not respond to emails with attachments or attached files.



WENDI GU *Literary Agent at Sanford J. Greenburger Associates*

she/her/hers | greenburger.com/agent/wendi-gu

[@wendilulugu](#)

Wendi Gu is a literary agent at Sanford J. Greenburger Associates. She represents voice-driven stories for all ages that uphold and explore themes of inclusivity and intersectionality. She is looking for

layered, surprising stories that combat power structures here and around the world. She grew up in the Midwest and currently lives in Brooklyn with her spouse and a dog named Beanie.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Fearless Flights of Hazel Ying Lee* by Julie Leung and Julie Kwon (Little Brown, Feb 2, 2021)

Next Book to Watch For: *Where the Rhythm Takes You* by Sarah Dass (Balzer + Bray, May 11, 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Red, White and Whole* by Rajani LaRocca

Seeking: Picture book manuscripts, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Nonfiction, Realistic contemporary, Mystery, Historical, Graphic novels

To Submit: You can query Wendi at wgu@sjga.com with KWELI QUERY in the subject line, with query letter and a 10-page sample in the body of the email. For illustrators and author/illustrators, please attach full sketch dummies and portfolios as a PDF or FTP link. Due to the volume of submissions, Wendi is very sorry that she is unable to respond to each query.



WESLIE TURNER *Senior Editor,*

Versify / Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

[@WeslieTurner](#)

Weslie Turner is the Senior Editor at Versify, an imprint of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. She has edited books for all ages, including the Dactyl Hill Squad series by New York Times-bestselling author Daniel José Older; *A Dream So Dark* by L.L. McKinney, creator of the #PublishingPaidMe hashtag; the indie bestseller *Vampires Never Get*

Old, an anthology edited by Zoraida Córdova and Natalie C. Parker; and Stella's Stellar Hair, the author-illustrator debut by Yesenia Moises. She loves identity-specific stories by creators from underrepresented backgrounds and especially enjoys original speculative fiction, fantasy, and science fiction.

PUBLISHING PROFESSIONALS



WHITNEY LEOPARD *Senior Editor, Random House Graphic /Random House Children's Books*
she/her/hers | whitneyleopard.com
@WhitLeopard

Whitney Leopard is the Senior Editor at Random House Graphic, where she acquires and edits graphic novels for kids and teens. She has worked on titles like Trung Le Nguyen's *The Magic Fish*, and Lucy Knisley's *Stepping Stones*. She is a frequent speaker at colleges and conventions across the US. Whitney

was previously an Editor at BOOM! Studios, managing the KaBOOM! imprint. She is known for her work on original graphic novels like *Bolivar* (an NPR Best Book of 2018) and comics series like *Lumberjanes* (a *New York Times* bestseller and Eisner Award-winner), and licensed comics like *Adventure Time* and *Steven Universe*.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Let's Talk About It* by Erika Moen and Matthew Nolan

Next Book to Watch For: *Apple of My Pie* by Mika Song, out on 6/8/21

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Gleem* by Freddy Carrasco

Seeking: Graphic novels

To Submit:

Submissions should be emailed to rhgraphic@penguinrandomhouse.com

All queries from attendees can be labeled as "KWELI SUBMISSION" in the subject line so that I know where they got the information. (Example: KWELI SUBMISSION: YA Romance by Author)

What I want specifically:

- Title, page count, and genre
- A brief elevator pitch and plot description (3 paragraphs max)
- Your bio
- -Full outline for the story
- 5-15 sample pages of the final comic
- Extras include character designs or any additional world building information. This should not be the priority of the pitch, but should be treated as extra development work to help us fall in love the story.



ZAREEN JAFFERY *Executive Editor, Kokila/Penguin Random House*
she/her/hers | penguin.com/publishers/kokila | @ZareenJaffery

Executive Editor Zareen Jaffery joined Kokila in January 2020, and will continue to publish books across age groups. She has acquired and edited a number of *New York Times* bestselling, award-winning, and critically acclaimed books over the course of her publishing career, including books by Jenny Han, Lupita Nyong'o, Mary H.K.

Choi, Siobhan Vivian, Hena Khan, Lilliam Rivera, Hanna Alkaf, Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, and S.K. Ali. In 2016, she launched Salaam Reads, an imprint at Simon & Schuster that focuses on publishing books about Muslim children and families.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Black Kids* by Christina Hammonds Reed

AUTHORS & ILLUSTRATORS



ALICIA D. WILLIAMS

she/her/hers | aliciadwilliams.com

[@authoraliciadwilliams](#) | [@storiestolife](#)

Alicia D. Williams is the author of *Genesis Begins Again*, which received a Newbery and Kirkus Prize honors, was a William C. Morris Award finalist, and won the Coretta Scott King - John Steptoe Award for New Talent. An oral storyteller in the African American tradition, Alicia celebrates her picture book *Jump at the Sun: The True Life Tale of Unstoppable Storycatcher Zora Neale Hurston*.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Genesis Begins Again*

Next Book to Watch For: *Shirley Chisholm Dared: The Story of the First Black Woman in Congress*



AIDA SALAZAR

she/her/hers | aidasalazar.com | [@mimawrites](#)

Aida Salazar is an award-winning author and arts activist whose writings explore issues of identity and social justice. She is the author of the critically acclaimed middle grade verse novels, *THE MOON WITHIN* (International Latino Book Award Winner) and *LAND OF THE CRANES* (NCTE Charlotte Huck Award Honor, Jane Addams Peace Honor). She is a founding member of Las Musas.

Her story, *By the Light of the Moon*, was adapted into a ballet production by the Sonoma Conservatory of Dance and is the first Xicana-themed ballet in history. She lives with her family of artists in a teal house in Oakland, CA.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): Picture book anthology *In The Spirit Of A Dream: 13 Stories of Immigrants of Color* (Fall, 2021), the picture book *Jovita Wore Pants: The Story Of A Revolutionary Fighter* (Spring, 2022), the novel *A Seed In The Sun* (2022), and the anthology *The Gift: Writings On Menstruation* by MG Authors of Color (2022).



ANGELINE BOULEY

she/her/hers | angelinebouley.com

[@FineAngeline](#) | [@angelinebouley](#)

Angeline Bouley, an enrolled member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, is a storyteller who writes about her Ojibwe community in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. She is a former

Director of the Office of Indian Education at the U.S. Department of Education. Angeline gained attention through the We Need Diverse Books (WNDB) Mentorship Program. *Firekeeper's Daughter*, her debut novel and instant #1 *New York Times* bestseller, was acquired by Tiffany Liao at Henry Holt / Macmillan for publication in March 2021. She is represented by Faye Bender at The Book Group. Angeline lives in southwest Michigan, but her home will always be on Sugar Island.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Firekeeper's Daughter* (publication date March 16, 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Crazy Horse's Girlfriend* by Erika T. Wurth



BRANDY COLBERT

she/her/hers | brandycolbert.com

[@brandycolbert](#)

Brandy Colbert is the award-winning author of several books for children and teens, including *The Voting Booth*, *The Only Black Girls in Town*, and Stonewall Book Award winner *Little & Lion*. She is co-writer of Misty Copeland's *Life in Motion* young readers edition, and her short fiction and essays have been published in a variety of critically acclaimed anthologies for young people. She is on faculty at Hamline University's MFA program in writing for children, and lives in Los Angeles.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Voting Booth*

Next Book to Watch For: *Black Birds in the Sky: The Story and Legacy of the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921* (Fall 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Color Me In* by Natasha Diaz



BRIAN YOUNG

he/him/his | brianyoung.com

[@hastiinchish](#) | [/hastiinchish](#)

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 *Tsidii Náás'íilid – Rainbow Bird* and *A Conversation on Race* with Native Americans for the short documentary series produced by the *New York Times*. Brian is currently working on his two books with Heartdrum, an imprint of HarperCollins. In addition to film and writing, Brian also works as a personal trainer, both online and in person.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Ancestor Approved: Intertribal Stories for Kids*

Next Book to Watch For: *Healer of the Water Monster* (May 11, 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Mind of My Mind* by Octavia Butler



CAROLE BOSTON WEATHERFORD

she/her/hers | cbweatherford.com

[/carole.weatherford](#) | [@poetweatherford](#)
[@caroleweatherford](#)

Carole Boston Weatherford, author of *Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre*, has 60 books, including three Caldecott Honor winners: *Freedom in Congo Square*, *Voice of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer*, and *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom*. Recent titles include *BOX: Henry Brown Mails Himself to Freedom, By and By: Charles A. Tindley, The Father of Gospel Music, R-E-S-P-E-C-T: Aretha Franklin, The Queen of Soul*, and *The Roots of Rap: 16 Bars on the 4 Pillars of Hip Hop*. Her latest release is *Dreams for a Daughter*. A two-time NAACP Image Award winner, she teaches at Fayetteville State University.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre*

Next Book to Watch For: *Dreams for a Daughter* (March 9, 2020)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Dream Builder* by Kelly Starling Lyons

AUTHORS & ILLUSTRATORS



CHRISTINE DAY

she/her/hers

Christine Day (Upper Skagit) is the author of *The Sea in Winter* and *I Can Make This Promise*, which was a best book of the year from *Kirkus*, *School Library Journal*, *NPR*, and the Chicago Public Library as well as an American Indian Youth Literature Award Honor Book and a Charlotte Huck Award Honor Book. She also wrote the forthcoming *She Persisted: Maria Tallchief*, an early reader biography inspired by Chelsea Clinton's bestselling picture book.

Christine lives in the Pacific Northwest with her husband and daughter.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Sea in Winter*

Next Book to Watch For: *She Persisted: Maria Tallchief* (November 2, 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Land of the Cranes* by Aida Salazar



CHRISTOPHER MYERS

he/him/his | www.kalyban.com

Christopher Myers is an artist and writer who lives in New York. While he is widely acclaimed for his work with literature for young people, he is also an accomplished fine artist who has lectured and exhibited internationally. His practice can be divided into two categories, interventions in historical narratives and work crafted with artisans from around the globe from places as disparate as Egypt, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Brooklyn.

Next Book to Watch For: *Cartography*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Hồ Xuân Hương



COZBI A. CABRERA

cozbi.com | [@cozbi](https://www.instagram.com/cozbi) | [/CozbiBooks](https://www.facebook.com/CozbiBooks)
[@cozbihandmade](https://www.tumblr.com/cozbihandmade)

Cozbi A. Cabrera paints, illustrates children's books, quilts, and designs clothing.

Her illustrated titles include: *Beauty Her Basket*/ Sandra Belton, Greenwillow Books; *Thanks A Million*/ Nikki Grimes, Greenwillow Books; *Stitchin' and Pullin' A Gees Bend Quilt*/ Patricia McKissack, Random House; *Most Loved in All the World*/ Tonya Cherie Hegamin, Houghton Mifflin (which won

the Christopher Award, given to outstanding works that represent the best of the human spirit) and *Exquisite: The Poetry and Life of Gwendolyn Brooks*/ Suzanne Slade, Abrams Books. She authored and illustrated *My Hair Is A Garden*/ Albert Whitman and *Me and Mama*/ Simon & Schuster. Cozbi lives in Evanston, Illinois with her husband and daughter.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Exquisite: The Poetry and Life of Gwendolyn Brooks* by Suzanne Slade and *Me & Mama*

Next Book to Watch For: *Me & Papa* (2022)



DARCIE LITTLE BADGER

she/her/hers | darciebadger.wordpress.com
[@shiningcomic](https://www.instagram.com/shiningcomic) | [@dr.littlebadger](https://www.instagram.com/dr.littlebadger)

Darcie Little Badger is a Lipan Apache writer with a PhD in oceanography. Her debut novel, *Elatsoe*, was featured in *Time Magazine* as one of the best 100 fantasy novels of all time. Darcie's short fiction, nonfiction and comics have appeared in multiple places, including Marvel's Voices: Indigenous Voices #1, *Nightmare Magazine* and *Strange Horizons*. She currently lives on both coasts of the United

States and is engaged to a veterinarian.

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

Next Book to Watch For: *A Snake Falls to Earth* (Fall 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Premee Mohamed



DARIA PEOPLES-RILEY

she/her/hers | dariapeoples.com
[@dariaspeoples](https://www.instagram.com/dariaspeoples)

Daria Peoples-Riley made her debut in children's publishing with companion titles *This Is It* and *I Got Next*. Daria's next picture book, *America, My Love, America, My Heart* invites readers of all ages to answer timely—and timeless—questions about their personal beliefs and attitudes toward the many different colors of America. Peoples-Riley is also

the illustrator of *Gloria Takes A Stand* by Jessica M. Rinker, a picture book biography about Gloria Steinem and forthcoming *Show The World* by Angela Dalton, a picture book that asks children what they will do, say, or create to express who they are.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *AMERICA, My Love AMERICA, My Heart*

Next Book to Watch For: *Show The World* by Angela Dalton, illustrated by Daria Peoples-Riley (Spring 2022)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Brown Baby Lullaby* by Tameka Fryer Brown



DAVID BOWLES

he/him/his | davidbowles.us
[@DavidOBowles](https://www.instagram.com/DavidOBowles)

David Bowles is a Mexican American author and translator from south Texas. Among his award-winning titles are *The Smoking Mirror* and the critically hailed *They Call Me Güero*. David's work has also been published in multiple anthologies, plus venues such as *The New York Times*, *School Library Journal*, *Strange Horizons*, *English Journal*, *Rattle*, *Translation Review*, and the *Journal of*

Children's Literature. In 2017, David was inducted into the Texas Institute of Letters. In 2020, he co-founded #DignidadLiteraria, a social justice movement advocating for greater Latinx representation in publishing.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Rise of the Halfling King*

Next Book to Watch For: *My Two Border Towns* (August 2021)

AUTHORS & ILLUSTRATORS



DERRICK BARNES

No pronoun | derrickdbarnes.com
@authorderrickdbarnes

Derrick Barnes wrote the *New York Times* bestsellers *The King of Kindergarten*, and *I Am Every Good Thing*, as well as the critically acclaimed multi-award winning picture book *Crown: An Ode to the Fresh Cut* which received a Newbery Honor, a Coretta

Scott King Author Honor, the 2018 Ezra Jack Keats New Writer Award, and the 2018 Kirkus Prize for Young Readers. He also wrote the bestselling chapter book series *Ruby and the Booker Boys*. Derrick is a graduate of Jackson State University (BA-Marketing '99), and was the first African-American creative copywriter hired by greeting cards giant Hallmark Cards. He is a native of Kansas City, MO, but currently lives in Charlotte, North Carolina, with his wife and their four sons.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *I Am Every Good Thing*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Erin Entrada Kelly, Liara Tamani



FLOYD COOPER

he/him/his | floydcooper.com
floyd.cooper.12 | @floyd.cooper.4
@floydcooper4

Tulsa native Floyd Cooper began drawing at age three and has never stopped. He studied fine art at the University of Oklahoma, where he began his career creating artwork for newspapers, advertising agencies, and an education company.

Cooper has also had a prolific career in children's publishing, authoring more than 100 children's books and illustrating more than 2,000 book covers. He has received considerable recognition and praise for his work, including several NAACP Image Awards for Outstanding Literary Work, Children's Nominations; the 2011 Independent Publishers Book Awards (IPPY) gold medal in children's picture books; the 2018 PHOENIX Award honor, 3 Coretta Scott King honors and multiple American Library Association Notable Children's Book awards. He was also the 2009 Coretta Scott King Book Awards Illustration winner. The KWANZAA Forever Stamp Design (2018) is his first project for the United States Postal Service.

Cooper lives in Easton, Pennsylvania, with his wife, two sons, daughter-in-law, and two grandsons.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Sprouting Wings* (Crown) *Unspeakable* (Lerner)

Next Book to Watch For: *A Day of Rememberin'* (Abrams)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Gloria Ogo, Nigeria & Tameka Brown, North Carolina



GRAHAM AKHURST

he/him/his

Graham Akhurst is an Aboriginal writer hailing from the Kokomini of Northern Queensland. He has been published widely in Australia and America for poetry, short fiction, and creative non-fiction. His debut novel *Borderland* will be released in 2021 with Hachette Australia. Graham is the recipient of the W.G. Walker Fulbright Scholar to complete an MFA in fiction at Hunter College, CUNY. He has an Honours degree in creative writing and an Mphil

in creative writing from the University of Queensland where he was also an Associate Lecturer in Indigenous Studies. He currently lives and studies in New York.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Borderland* is my debut upcoming this year.

Next Book to Watch For: *Borderland*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: ZZ Packer



IBI ZOBOI

she/her/hers | ibizoboi.com | @ibizoboi

Ibi Zoboi is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *American Street*, National Book Award finalist, *Pride, My Life as an Ice Cream Sandwich*, and *Punching the Air* with co-author and *Exonerated Five* member, Yusef Salaam. She is the editor of the anthology *Black Enough: Stories of Being Young & Black in America*. Born in Haiti and raised in New York City, she now lives in New Jersey with her husband and their three children.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Punching the Air*

Next Book to Watch For: *The People Remember* illus. by Loveis Wise

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Ikenga* by Nnedi Okorafor



J. DILLARD

he/him/his | iamjdillard.com
@jdthekidbarber @iamjdillard

J. Dillard, (JD) is a master barber, a certified consultant, industry leader and 'barberpreneur'. JD started cutting his own hair at the age of 10 and became a professional in 1999 and launched his own shop while attending college at Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama. As an industry visionary Dillard's mission is to assist G.L.A.M. industry professionals with product development,

branding, marketing, social media and business services. JD and the Great Barber Battle is his debut title in the FOLLOW YOUR CLIPPERS TALES series.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *JD and the Great Barber Battle*

Next Book to Watch For: *JD and the Family Business* (Summer 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *The Secrets of a 6 Figure Barber/stylist* by Elgen Mcferren Jr.

AUTHORS & ILLUSTRATORS



JASMINE WARGA

she/her/hers | jasminewarga.com
@jasminewarga @jasminewargabooks

Jasmine Warga is the Newbery Honor award-winning author of *Other Words For Home*, and YA books, *My Heart and Other Black Holes*, and *Here We Are Now*. Her next book for young readers, *The Shape of Thunder*, will be published in May 2021. She lives in the Chicago area with her family.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Other Words For Home*

Next Book to Watch For: *The Shape of Thunder* (May 11, 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Say Something* by Lisa Moore Ramee



JAVAKA STEPTOE

he/him/his | javaka.com | [javakastep toe](https://www.instagram.com/javakastep toe)
@javaka_steptoe

Javaka Steptoe's debut picture book, *In Daddy's Arms I Am Tall: African Americans Celebrating Fathers* (Lee & Low Books), earned him a Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award, a 1998 NAACP Image Awards nomination for Outstanding Children's Literature Work and a host of other honors. Since then, he has illustrated and/or written more than an dozen books for young readers, collaborating with some

of the top names in the business—Walter Dean Myers, Nikki Grimes, and Karen English.

One critic explained about his work, "Javaka Steptoe utilizes everyday objects from aluminum plates to pocket lint, and sometimes a jigsaw and paint, to deliver reflective and thoughtful collage creations filled with vitality, playful energy and strength."

In January 2017, Javaka won the 2017 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award and the 2017 Caldecott Medal for his picture book biography *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat* (Little, Brown), more than thirty years after his father won two Caldecott Honors.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Radiant Child: The Story of Young Artist Jean-Michel Basquiat* (Little, Brown)



JENNIFER DE LEON

she/her/hers | jenniferdeleonauthor.com
@delejenn | @jdeleonwriter

Jennifer De Leon is the author of *Don't Ask Me Where I'm From* (Atheneum/Simon & Schuster, 2020) and the editor of *Wise Latinas* (University of Nebraska Press). An Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at Framingham State University, and a faculty member in the MFA in Creative Nonfiction program at Bay Path University, she has published prose in over a dozen literary journals and is a

GrubStreet instructor and board member. Her essay collection, *White Space: Essays on Culture, Race, & Writing*, is the recipient of the Juniper Prize and will be published by UMass Press in Spring 2021.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Don't Ask Me Where I'm From* (Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, Simon & Schuster, 2020)

Next Book to Watch For: *Maya* (Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, Simon & Schuster, 2022)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Your Corner Dark* by Desmond Hall



JERRY CRAFT

he/him/his | jerrycraft@aol.com
@jerrycraft

Jerry Craft is the *New York Times* bestselling author and illustrator of the graphic novels *New Kid* and *Class Act*. *New Kid* is the winner of the 2020 John Newbery Medal for the most outstanding contribution to children's literature. In addition, *New Kid* was awarded the Kirkus Prize for Young Readers' Literature. He is also the recipient of the Coretta Scott King Author Award for the most

outstanding work by an African American writer. Jerry was born in Harlem, grew up in New York City and currently lives in Connecticut with his two sons and two beagles.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Class Act*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Eric Velasquez



JESS X. SNOW

they/them/theirs | jessxsnow.com
@jessxsnow

Jess X. Snow is a non-binary film director, artist, poet, children's book author and community arts educator who creates queer asian immigrant stories that transcend borders, binaries and time. They are the author and illustrator of *We Always Had Wings*, (Make Me a World/Random House) releasing in Fall 2022. They also illustrated *The Ocean Calls*, (Kokila/Penguin Young Readers) a 2020 *Kirkus*

Reviews Best Picture Book and a *Booklist* Editor's Choice book. They bring their background in social movement art, poetry and trauma-informed healing into their film work which has been supported by the Tribeca Film Institute, Canada Council of the Arts, the Smithsonian Asian Pacific Center, and Inside Out.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Ocean Calls*

Next Book to Watch For: *We Always Had Wings* (August 2022 / Make Me a World)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Intergalactic Travels: Poems from a Fugitive Alien* by Alan Pelaez Lopez



JOANNA HO

she/her/hers | joannahowrites.com
@joannahowrites

Joanna Ho is the author of *Eyes that Kiss in the Corners* (Jan 5, 2021), *Playing at the Border: A Story of Yo-Yo Ma* (Fall 2021), *The Silence that Binds Us* (2022) and *One Day* (2023). She is a writer and educator with a passion for anti-bias, anti-racism and equity work. 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 Kiss In The Corners* (releases Jan 5, 2021)

Next Book to Watch For: *Playing At The Border: A Story Of Yo-Yo Ma* (Fall 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Stand Up, Yumi Chung!* by Jessica Kim

AUTHORS & ILLUSTRATORS



JUANA MARTINEZ-NEAL

she/her/hers | juanamartinezneal.com
@juanamartinez | @juanamartinezn

Juana Martinez-Neal is the recipient of the 2019 Caldecott Honor for *Alma and How She Got Her Name* (Candlewick Press), her debut picture book as author-illustrator. She also the recipient of the 2020 Robert F. Sibert Medal for *Fry Bread: A Native American Story* (Roaring Brook) and the 2018 Pura Belpré Medal for Illustration for *La Princesa and the Pea* (Putnam).

Juana was named to the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) Honor list in 2014, and was awarded the SCBWI Portfolio Showcase Grand Prize in 2012. She was born in Lima, the capital of Peru, and now lives in Arizona, with her husband and three children.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Zonia's Rain Forest* and *La Selva de Zonia* (Candlewick Press - March 30, 2021)

Next Book to Watch For: "Tomatoes for Neela" (Viking - Fall 2021)



KELLY STARLING LYONS

she/her/hers | kellystarlinglyons.com
/kellystarlinglyons | @kelstarly

Kelly Starling Lyons is an award-winning author, teaching artist and founding member of The Brown Bookshelf. Her titles for children span easy readers, picture books, chapter books, fiction, nonfiction, and series. For more than a decade, Lyons has created inspiring books that center Black heroes, celebrate family, friendship and heritage and show all children the storyteller they hold inside. Her

titles include Caldecott Honor winner *Going Down Home with Daddy*, *Sing a Song: How Lift Every Voice & Sing Inspired*.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Ty's Travels: All Aboard!*

Next Book to Watch For: *Ty's Travels: Beach Day* (May 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Escape from . . . Hurricane Katrina* by Judy Allen Dodson - judyalldodson.com



LAMAR GILES

he/him/his | lamargiles.com
@LRGiles | @lamargiles

Lamar Giles writes for teens and adults across multiple genres, with work appearing on numerous Best Of lists each and every year. He is the author of the acclaimed novels *Fake ID*, *Endangered*, *Overtuned*, *Spin*, *The Last Last-Day-of-Summer*, *Not So Pure and Simple*, and *The Last Mirror on the Left* as well as numerous pieces of short fiction. He is a founding member of We Need Diverse Books and

resides in Virginia with his wife.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Last Mirror on the Left*

Next Book to Watch For: *The Last Chance for Logan County* (Fall 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Opposite of Always* by Justin A. Reynolds



LEAH HENDERSON

she/her/hers | leahhendersonbooks.com @LeahsMark | @Leahs_Mark

Leah Henderson is the author of the middle grade novels *The Magic in Changing Your Stars* and *One Shadow on the Wall*. Her picture books include *Together We March*, and the forthcoming *A Day for Rememberin'*, *Daddy Speaks Love* and *Your Voice, Your Vote*. Leah holds an MFA in Writing and is on faculty in Spalding University's School of Creative and Professional Writing.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Magic in Changing Your Stars*, Sterling

Next Book to Watch For: *A Day for Rememberin'*, Abrams May 11th, 2021



LIARA TAMANI

she/her/hers | liaratamani.com
@liaratamani

Liara Tamani lives in Houston, Texas. She holds an MFA in writing from Vermont College. She is the author of the acclaimed *Calling My Name*, which was a 2018 PEN America Literary Award Finalist and SCBWI Golden Kite Finalist, and *All the Things We Never Knew*, which was a 2020 *Kirkus* Best YA Book of the Year. liaratamani.com

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *All the Things We Never Knew*

Next Book to Watch For: *What She Missed*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Renée Watson



MAHOGANY L. BROWNE

Charlotte Sheedy, Sheedy Literary Agency

she/her/hers | mahoganylbrowne.com | mobrowne.com | @mobrowne

Mahogany L. Browne is a writer, organizer & educator. Executive Director of Bowery Poetry Club & Artistic Director of Urban Word NYC & Poetry Coordinator at St. Francis College. Browne has received fellowships from Agnes Gund, Air Serenbe, Cave Canem, Poets House, Mellon Research & Rauschenberg. She is the author of *Woke: A Young Poets Call to Justice*, *Woke Baby*, *Black Girl Magic* (Macmillan), *Kissing Caskets* (Yes Yes Books) & *Dear Twitter* (Penmanship Books). She is also the founder of the Woke Baby Book Fair (a nationwide diversity literature campaign) & as an Arts for Justice grantee, is excited to release her first YA Novel *Chlorine Sky* in January 2021. She lives in Brooklyn, NY.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Chlorine Sky* (January 12, 2021)

Next Book to Watch For: *Black Boy Joy* & *Black Girl Bloom* (board books from Macmillan)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Eloise Greenfield has written my favorite children's book: *Honey, I Love*

AUTHORS & ILLUSTRATORS



MEG MEDINA

she/her/hers | megmedina.com
@Meg-Medina | [MegMedinaBooks](https://www.instagram.com/MegMedinaBooks)
/meg.medina.10

Meg Medina is the 2019 Newbery award-winning and *New York Times* best-selling author who writes picture books, as well as middle grade and young adult fiction. Her works have been called “heartbreaking,” “lyrical” and “must haves for every collection.” She lives with her family in Richmond, VA.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited):

Merci Suárez Can't Dance (Candlewick Press, April 6, 2021)

Next Book to Watch For: *Sonia Sotomayor* (Penguin/ June 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Cynthia Salasay - debut novelist of *Private Lessons*; NoNieqa Ramos



MICHAELA GOADE

she/her/hers | michaelagoade.com
@michaelagoade

Michaela Goade is the 2021 Caldecott Medalist and *New York Times* Bestselling illustrator of *We Are Water Protectors* (Roaring Brook/MacMillan) and a 2020 Kirkus Prize Finalist. Her books include *Encounter* and *Shanyaak'utlaax: Salmon Boy*, winner of the 2018 American Indian Youth Literature Award for Best Picture Book. She is honored to work with Indigenous authors and tribal organizations in

the creation of beautiful and much-needed books. Michaela is an enrolled member of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska and lives in Sheeł'ká (Sitka), Alaska, a magical island on the edge of a wide, wild sea.

Next Book to Watch For: *I Sang You Down from the Stars* by Tasha Spillett-Sumner (April 2021)



MIKE JUNG

he/him/his | mikejung.com
@mike_jung | /captainstupendous
@mikejungwroteabook

Mike Jung is the author of *Geeks, Girls, and Secret Identities*, *Unidentified Suburban Object*, and *The Boys in the Back Row*, and contributed to the anthologies *(Don't) Call Me Crazy*, and *The Hero Next Door*. His books have been honored by the Bank Street College of Education, Children's Book Council, Cooperative Children's Book Center,

Georgia State Book Awards, Iowa Children's Choice Awards, Kansas State Reading Circle, National Parenting Publications Awards, Parents Choice Foundation, and Texas Bluebonnet Awards. Mike is a founding member of the #WeNeedDiverseBooks team, and lives in Oakland, California, with his family. Learn more at mikejung.com.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Boys in the Back Row*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Peasprout Chen: Future Legend of Skate and Sword*, by Henry Lien



MINH LÊ

he/him/his | minhlebooks.com
@bottomshelfbks

Minh Lê is the author of *Lift* (a *Washington Post* Best Book of the Year), *Drawn Together* (winner of the 2019 Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature), *Let Me Finish*, and *The Perfect Seat* (all published by Little, Brown). He also wrote *Green Lantern: Legacy*, his debut MG graphic novel for DC Comics. In addition to books, he has written for a variety of national publications, including the *New York Times*, *HuffPost*, and *NPR*. Outside of spending

time with his wonderful wife and children, his favorite place to be is in the middle of a good book.

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

Next Book to Watch For: *The Blur*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Sweetest Kulu* by Celina Kalluk & Alexandria Neonakis



MISA SUGIURA

she/her/hers | misasugiura.com
@misallaneous_1

Misa Sugiura's ancestors include a poet, a priestess, a samurai, and a stowaway. She is the author of two critically acclaimed and award-winning young adult novels, *It's Not Like It's a Secret* and *This Time Will Be Different*, and a short story in the anthology, *Come On In: 15 Stories of Immigration and Finding Home*. Misa lives in the San Francisco Bay Area under a giant oak tree with her husband, two sons, and three cats. You can visit her online at misasugiura.com.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *This Time Will Be Different*

Next Book to Watch For: *Love & Other Natural Disasters*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Ilene Wong (*This is My Brain in Love*)



MONICA BROWN

she/her/hers | monicabrown.net
@monicabrownbks

Dr. Monica Brown is the award-winning author of many multicultural books for children, including, *Sharuko: El Arqueólogo Peruano/Peruvian Archeologist Julio C. Tello*, *Frida and her Animalitos*, *Waiting for the Biblioburro/Esperando al Biblioburro*, *Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match/no combina*, and the Lola Levine chapter book series. Her books have garnered multiple starred reviews and awards, and

her books have appeared in the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *NPR's All Things Considered*. Her new picture book, *Small Room, Big Dreams: The Journey of Julian and Joaquín Castro* (Spanish and English editions) is forthcoming from HarperCollins/Quill Tree this May 2021.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Sharuko: El Arqueólogo Peruano/Peruvian Archeologist Julio C. Tello*

Next Book to Watch For: *Small Rooms, Big Dreams: The Journey of Julián and Joaquín Castro* (May 2021, HarperCollins)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Anything by NoNieqa Ramos

AUTHORS & ILLUSTRATORS



NADIA OWUSU

she/her/hers | nadiaowusu.com

[@nadiaowusu1](https://twitter.com/nadiaowusu1)

Nadia Owusu is a Brooklyn-based writer and urbanist. Her first book, *Aftershocks: A Memoir*, was selected as one of 13 new books to watch for in January 2021 by the *New York Times*, one of BookExpo America's buzziest books of the year, and one of Oprah.com's 55 most anticipated books of 2021, among other honors.

Nadia is the recipient of a 2019 Whiting Award.

Her lyric essay chapbook, *So Devilish a Fire* won the *Atlas Review* chapbook contest. Her writing has appeared or is forthcoming in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post's* the *Lily*, *Orion*, the *Literary Review*, *The Paris Review Daily*, *Electric Literature*, *Catapult*, *Bon Appétit*, *Epiphany* and others.

By day, Nadia is the Director of Storytelling at Frontline Solutions, a Black-owned consulting firm that helps social-change organizations to define goals, execute plans, and evaluate impact. She is a graduate of Pace University (BA, Political Science) and Hunter College (MS, Urban Policy). She earned her MFA in creative nonfiction at the Mountainview low-residency program where she now teaches.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Aftershocks: A Memoir* (Simon & Schuster, January 12, 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Dantiel Moniz's *Milk Blood Heat*



NONIEQA RAMOS

she/her/hers | soaring20spb.com/nonieqa-ramos

pbdebut-troupe21.com | [@nonieqaramos](https://twitter.com/nonieqaramos)

NoNieqa Ramos wrote *The Disturbed Girl's Dictionary*, a 2019 YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults Selection and a 2019 In the Margins Top Ten pick. Hip Latina included her sophomore book *The Truth Is* in the "10 of the Best Latinx Young Adult Books of 2019." *Remezcla*

included *The Truth Is* in the "15 Best Books by Latino and Latin American Authors of 2019." Versify, an imprint of HMH Books, will publish her debut picture book *Your Mama* April 6th, 2021! Lerner will publish *Hair Story* September 2021. NoNieqa is a proud member of Las Musas, The Soaring 20s, and PB Debut Troupe 21 collectives.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Hair Story*

Next Book to Watch For: *Hair Story* (September 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Ana Maria Reyes Does Not Live in a Castle* by Hilda Eunice Burgos



OLUGBEMISOLA RHUDAY-PERKOVICH

she/her/hers | olugbemisolabooks.com

[@olugbemisolarhudayperkovich](https://twitter.com/olugbemisolarhudayperkovich)

[@olugbemisola](https://twitter.com/olugbemisola)

Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich is the author of *8th Grade Superzero*, which was named a Notable Book for a Global Society and a Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People, and Ghostwriter/Sesame Workshop adaptation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. She is the coauthor of the middle

grade novel *Two Naomis*, which was nominated for an NAACP Image Award and is a Junior Library Guild selection, and its sequel, the Nerdy award-winning *Naomis Too*. She also writes nonfiction, including *Above and Beyond: NASA's Journey to Tomorrow*, and *Someday is Now: Clara Luper and the 1958 Oklahoma City Sit-Ins*. She is a member of the Brown Bookshelf, and editor of the We Need Diverse Books middle grade anthology, *The Hero Next Door*.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *It Doesn't Take A Genius*

Next Book to Watch For: *Operation Sisterhood* (2022)

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



RAJANI LAROCCA

she/her/hers | rajanilarocca.com

[@rajanilarocca](https://twitter.com/rajanilarocca)

Rajani LaRocca was born in India, raised in Kentucky, and now lives in the Boston area, where she practices medicine and writes novels and picture books. Her middle grade debut, *Midsummer's Mayhem*, was a *Kirkus* Best Middle Grade Book of 2019 and a 2020 Massachusetts Book Award Honor title. Her debut picture book, *Seven Golden Rings*, features a math puzzle and an

explanation of binary numbers, and received starred reviews from *Booklist* and *Publishers Weekly*. Her middle grade novel in verse, *Red, White, and Whole*, involves heritage and fitting in, science and poetry, Hindu mythology and 80s pop music, holding on and letting go. She finds inspiration in her family, her childhood, the natural world, and just about everywhere she looks.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Red, White, and Whole* (February 2, 2021)

Next Book to Watch For: *Bracelets For Bina's Brothers* (April 20, 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *The Arabic Quilt* by Aya Khalil, illus. Anait Semirdzhyan

AUTHORS & ILLUSTRATORS



RENÉE WATSON

she/her/hers | reneewatson.net
@reneauthor | @harlemportland

Renée Watson is a *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): *Love is a Revolution*

Next Book to Watch For: *Ways to Grow Love*, Spring 2021



RIO CORTEZ

she/her/hers | riocortez.com | @ohreallyrio

Rio Cortez is the author of *I Have Learned to Define a Field as a Space Between Mountains* (Jai-Alai Books, 2015) and *The ABCs of Black History* (Workman, 2020). Born and raised in Salt Lake City, she now lives, writes, and works in Harlem.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The ABCs of Black History*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Danzy Senna



RITA WILLIAMS-GARCIA

she/her/hers | ritawg.com
@onecrazyrita | @ritawilliams-garcia

Rita Williams-Garcia, a Queens, New York native, is the celebrated author of novels for young adults and middle grade readers. Her most recent novel, *Clayton Byrd Goes Underground* won the 2018 NAACP Image Award and was a 2017 National Book Award Finalist. Williams-Garcia is most known for her multiple award-winning Gaither

Sisters trilogy. She is both a three-time Coretta Scott King Author Award recipient and National Book Award Finalist. Her forthcoming historical novel, *A Sitting in St. James* marks her return to young adult fiction.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *A Sitting in St. James*

Next Book to Watch For: *You Don't Own Me* (working title)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *CASTE: The Origin of Our Discontent* by Isabel Wilkerson



SAADIA FARUQI

she/her/hers | saadiafaruqi.com
@saadiafaruqi

Saadia Faruqi is a Pakistani American author, essayist and interfaith activist. She writes the children's early reader series "Yasmin" published by Capstone and other books for children, including middle grade novels *A Place At The Table* (HMH/Clarion 2020) co-written with Laura Shovan, and

A Thousand Questions (Harper Collins 2020). She has also written *Brick Walls: Tales of Hope & Courage from Pakistan* a short story collection for adults and teens. Saadia is editor-in-chief of *Blue Minaret*, a magazine for Muslim art, poetry and prose, and was featured in *Oprah Magazine* in 2017 as a woman making a difference in her community. She resides in Houston, TX with her husband and children.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *A Thousand Questions*

Next Book to Watch For: *Yusuf Azeem is Not a Hero* (Sept 7, 2021)



SAFIA ELHILLO

she/her/hers | beotis.com/safiaelhilllo
@safiamafia | @mafiasafia

Safia Elhillo is the author of *The January Children* (University of Nebraska Press, 2017), novel in verse *Home Is Not a Country* (forthcoming 2021 from Make Me A World/Random House), and her next collection of poems *Girls That Never Die* is due out 2021 via One World Books an imprint of Penguin

Random House. Sudanese by way of Washington, DC, and a Cave Canem fellow, she holds an MFA from the New School.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The January Children* (University of Nebraska Press, 2017)

Next Book to Watch For: *Home Is Not a Country* (forthcoming 2021 from Make Me A World/Random House), and her next collection of poems *Girls That Never Die* is due out 2021 via One World Books an imprint of Penguin Random House



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 for *Red Tricycle* and *The Food Network Magazine*. Sarah is an active volunteer for *Kweli* and 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 picture books and middle

grade works 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: *Minor Feelings: An Asian American Reckoning* by Cathy Park Hong

AUTHORS & ILLUSTRATORS



SHEBA KARIM

she/her/hers | shebakarim.com
@shebakarim | @shebakarim

Sheba Karim is the author of the YA novels *Skunk Girl*, *That Thing We Call a Heart*, *Mariam Sharma Hits the Road*, and *The Marvelous Mirza Girls* (forthcoming May 2021). She has an MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop, is a Writer-in-Residence at Vanderbilt University, and wishes everyone a safe and happy 2021.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited):

Mariam Sharma Hits the Road

Next Book to Watch For: *The Marvelous Mirza Girls* (5/18/21)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Kelly Loy Gilbert



SUSAN MUADDI DARRAJ

she/her/hers | SusanMuaddiDarraj.com
@SusanDarraj

Susan Muaddi Darraj's short story collection, *A Curious Land: Stories from Home*, was named the winner of the AWP Grace Paley Prize for Short Fiction. It also won the 2016 Arab American Book Award, a 2016 American Book Award, and was shortlisted for a Palestine Book Award. In 2018, she was named a Ford Fellow by USA Artists.

In 2019, she launched the viral #TweetYourThobe social media campaign to promote Palestinian culture. Later that year, she was named winner of the Rose Nader Award, by the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC), an award given by the Nader family to a person who "demonstrates an unwavering dedication and commitment to values of equality and justice."

In January 2020, Capstone Books launched her debut children's chapter book series, *Farah Rocks*, about a smart, brave Palestinian American girl named Farah Hajjar. *Farah Rocks* is the first chapter book series to feature a Palestinian American protagonist.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Farah Rocks New Beginnings*

Next Book to Watch For: *Farah Rocks Florida* (July 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *The Moon Within* by Aida Salazar



SHEETAL SHETH

she/her/hers | sheetalsheth.com
@sheetalsheth | @beneaththesheetz
/OfficialSheetalSheth

Sheetal Sheth is an acclaimed actress, producer, author, and activist. She is known for her provocative performances in a wide range of memorable roles on film and television. She has starred in over 20 feature films and many TV shows and is a favorite in the independent film world, having won five best actress awards on the film festival circuit. She

has earned a loyal, international following. Sheetal 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. Sheth supports marginalized communities not only through her own pioneering work as an actor, but by also appearing at workshops and panels and speaking directly to issues facing those communities. She is known as an outspoken advocate and has delivered talks and keynotes at festivals and charity galas. She's had op-eds published on *CNN*, *The Daily Beast*, and *Thrive Global*. She served in President Clinton's AmeriCorps and is currently on the advisory board of Equality Now and an ambassador for CA First Partner, Jennifer Newsom's, The Representation Project. Her Anjali book series is the first and only illustrated book series featuring a South Asian hero.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Always Anjali*

Next Book to Watch For: *Bravo Anjali!* (Sept 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Nikita Gill



SHING YIN KHOR

they/them/theirs | shingkhor.com
@sawdustbear

Shing Yin Khor is a Malaysian-American Ignatz-winning cartoonist and immersive installation artist exploring personal narrative, new human rituals, and collaborative worldbuilding through graphic novels and large scale art structures. They create comics at the intersection of race, immigrant stories, queerness and reinterpreting Americana. They are the author of Route 66 road trip memoir

The American Dream?, one of NPR's favorite books of 2019, and the historical fiction graphic novel, *The Legend of Auntie Po* (Kokila, June 2021) about a young Chinese-American logging camp cook in the Sierra Nevadas telling Paul Bunyan tales.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The American Dream? A Journey on Route 66* (Lerner, August 2019)

Next Book to Watch For: *The Legend of Auntie Po* (Kokila, June 2021)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Prince of Cats*, Ron Wimberly

AUTHORS & ILLUSTRATORS



SIMRAN JEET SINGH

he/him/his | simranjeetsingh.org
@simran

Recognized among TIME Magazine's 16 people fighting for a more equal America, Simran Jeet Singh is Senior Adviser for Equity and Inclusion at YSC Consulting and a Visiting Professor at Union Seminary. He is a 2020 Equality Fellow with the Open Society Foundations, a Racial Equity Media Fellow with Interfaith Youth Core, and a Senior Fellow for the Sikh Coalition. Simran holds a PhD,

MPhil, and MA from Columbia University, an MTS from Harvard University, and a BA from Trinity University.

This past year, Simran added author to his resume with the release of his best-selling children's book from Penguin Random House (Kokila), *Fauja Singh Keeps Going: The True Story of the Oldest Person to Ever Run a Marathon*. He is currently completing an adult non-fiction book for Penguin Random House (Riverhead) entitled *More of This Please: Sikh Wisdom for the Soul*.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Fauja Singh Keeps Going*

Next Book to Watch For: *More of This Please: Sikh Wisdom for the Soul*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Between Us and Abuela: A Family Story from the Border*, Mitali Perkins



TASHA SPILLETT

she/her/hers | tashaspillett.com
@tasha.spillett

Tasha Spillett draws her strength from both her Nehiyaw & Trinidadian bloodlines. She is a new mother, a celebrated educator, author, poet and emerging scholar, but is most heart-tied to contributing to community lead work that centers land and water defence, and the protection of Indigenous women and girls.

Tasha is a PhD Candidate at the University of Saskatchewan, where she holds a Vanier Canada Award. In her work as a doctoral student, she is weaving together her cultural identity, and commitment to community to produce a body of research that amplifies Indigenous women's demands for justice for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People, and serves as a continuation of the resistance against the assault of colonialism.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *I Sang You Down From the Stars* (Little Brown Books (US) OWL Books (CAD))

Next Book to Watch For: *Beautiful You, Beautiful Me*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: David A. Robertson



VEERA HIRANANDANI

she/her/hers | veerahiranandani.com
@veerahira | @veerawrites

Veera Hiranandani is the author of *The Night Diary*, which has received many awards including the 2019 Newbery Honor Award, the 2019 Walter Dean Myers Honor Award, and the 2018 Malka Penn Award for Human Rights in Children's Literature. She is also the author of *The Whole Story of Half a Girl* and the chapter book series, Phoebe G. Green. She earned her MFA at Sarah Lawrence College. A

former book editor at Simon & Schuster, she now teaches creative writing. Her next novel, *How to Find What You're Not Looking For*, releases this fall with Kokila Books.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Night Diary*

Next Book to Watch For: *How to Find What You're Not Looking For*, Kokila, Fall 2021

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Genesis Begins Again* by Alicia D. Williams

Kweli Sing the Truth! Mentorship Program

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Kweli means truth in Swahili. Our **Sing the Truth! Mentorship Program** officially began on January 27, 2021 with pre-conference events featuring authors **Rio Cortez** and **Joanna Ho**. Our program will continue through November when we offer our reading series with Kweli 2021 mentees.

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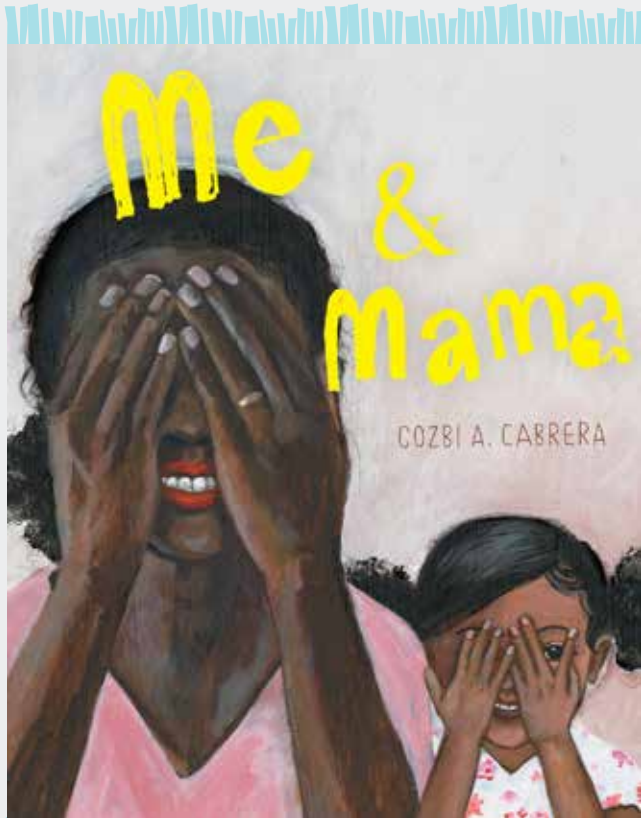


IMAGE: PUBLISHER, DENENE MILLNER BOOKS

ME & MAMA

THE CALDECOTT HONOR
THE CORETTA SCOTT KING HONOR

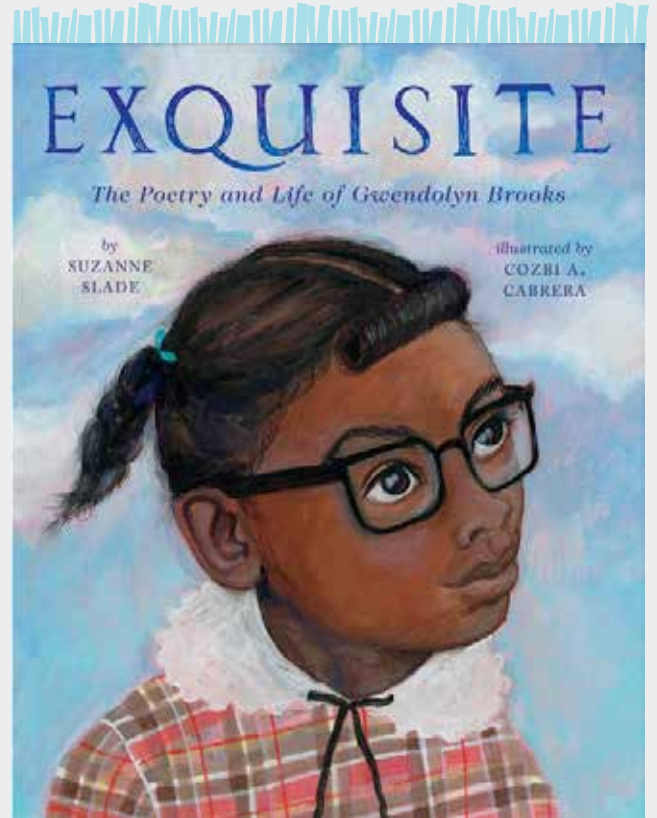


IMAGE: PUBLISHER, ABRAMS BOOKS

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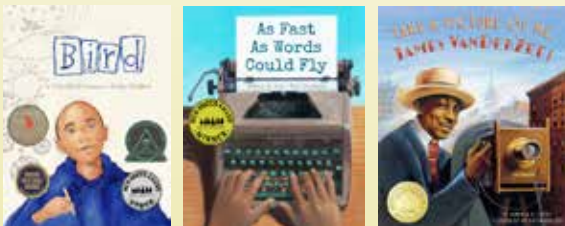
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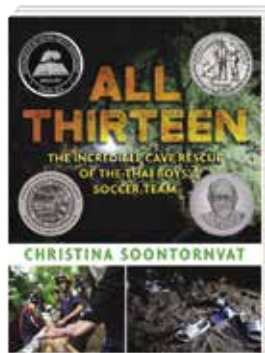
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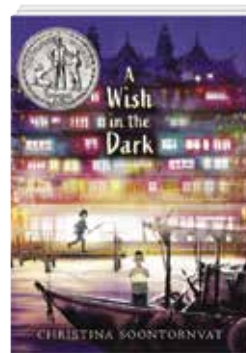
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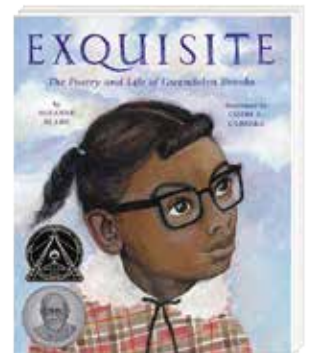
2021 Newbery Honor Book
 2021 Robert F. Sibert Honor Book



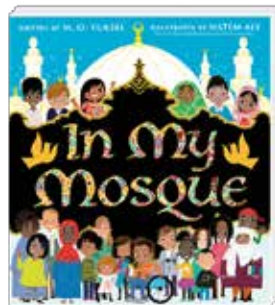
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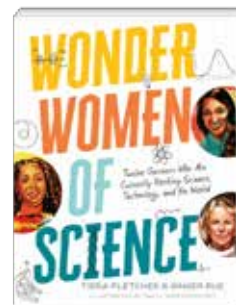
2021 Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Book
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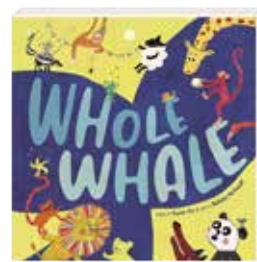
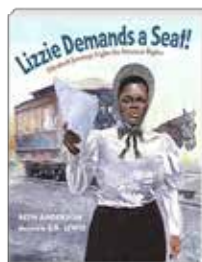
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Kweli POST-CONFERENCE EVENTS

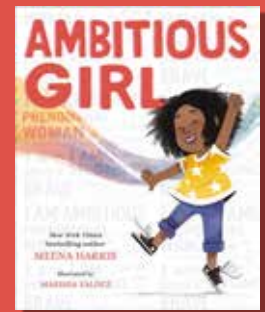
Reading & Conversation Series *on ART, CRAFT and PROCESS*

Rita Williams Garcia
on A Sitting in St. James
with Carole Boston Weatherford



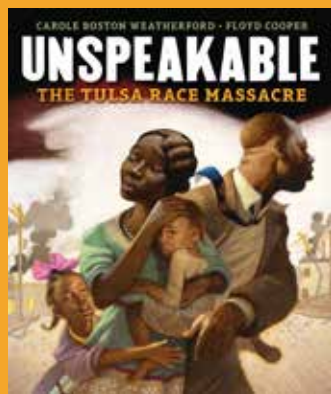
May 20th, 7 PM EST

Marissa Valdez
on Ambitious Girl
with Annabella Correa-Maynard



May 18th, 7 PM EST

Carol Boston Weatherford
on Unspeakable: The Tulsa Race Massacre



May 13th, 7 PM EST