

Kweli Eighth Annual

Color of Children's Literature Conference

March 31st-April 2nd, 2023



Co-sponsored by

BCRW

BARNARD CENTER FOR
RESEARCH ON WOMEN

The Barnard
English Department
Creative Writing
Program

Victoria Sanders

AND ASSOCIATES

Proudly representing Denene Millner, Cozbi A. Cabrera, Sili Recio, Karen Good-Marable, Alice Faye Duncan, Dr. Stacey Patton, and open for all Kweli submissions.

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LAUREN FRANCIS-SHARMA

JEWISH BOOK AWARD WINNER

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PW BEST BOOKS

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BOOK CLUB PICKS

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLERS

INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLERS

AMERICAN BOOK AWARD WINNERS

SYDNEY PEACE PRIZE WINNERS

PULITZER PRIZE WINNERS

EDGAR AWARD WINNERS

ROBERT F. SIBERT HONOR

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT
AWARD WINNERS

THESKIMM BOOK CLUB PICKS

O MAGAZINE PICKS

PEOPLE MAGAZINE PICKS

INDIE NEXT PICK

GOLDEN LAUREL WINNERS

TARGET BOOK CLUB

PATRISSE CULLORS



For our submission guidelines, please visit VictoriaSanders.com

2023 *Kweli* Color of Children's Literature Conference

SCHEDULE *at a glance*

Saturday, April 1, 2023

8:30 – 8:45 AM	Welcome by Laura Pegram Adaptation of <i>The Courage of the Little Hummingbird</i> : Live music and dance		
8:45 – 9:15 AM	KEYNOTE by Leah Henderson		
	A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track	B. Novels/Memoir Track (YA & MG)	C. Illustrated Books & Nonfiction Track
9:30 – 10:30 AM	Afrofuturist Practice: Inviting the Past into the Present	You Crack Me Up: Working in the Humor for Middle Grade & YA	Passing it Down
10:45 – 11:45 AM	Creating A Sustainable Writing Practice with Wellness at the Center	The Plot Thickens	Picturing Family History
12:15 – 12:45 PM	LUNCH KEYNOTE CONVERSATION with Jacqueline Woodson and Leah Henderson		
1:00 – 2:00 PM	Take Scraps and Make Up the Rest	Revolutionary Rom-Coms YA Romance	Write Like a Painter
2:15 – 3:15 PM	Partnering with Your Publisher for Your Book Launch	Bright Red Fruit & When We Were Sisters	Tips from Author-Illustrators
3:30 – 4:00 PM	KEYNOTE CONVERSATION with Andrea L. Rogers and Irene Vázquez		
4:15 – 5:15 PM	CLOSING KEYNOTE with Malinda Lo		
5:30 – 6:30 PM	Author Signing		

See pages 9-13 for details about Friday-Sunday sessions

2023 *Kweli* Color of Children's Literature Conference

SCHEDULE *at a glance*

Sunday, April 2, 2023

9:15 AM	Welcome by Laura Pegram		
	A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track	B. Craft Track (YA & MG)	C. Illustrated Books & Nonfiction Track
9:30 – 10:30 AM	Business of Publishing	Voice and Audience: First Pages	Graphic Novel: Pitch and Process
10:45 – 11:45 AM	Fantasy	Paragraphs	The Community That Binds
11:45 – 12:15 PM	Lunch Break		
12:30 – 1:30 PM	Novel-in-Verse Craft Talk		
1:45 – 2:45 PM	Marketing: Not As Scary As You May Think		
3:00 – 4:00 PM	Imprints		
4:15 – 5:15 PM	CLOSING KEYNOTE CONVERSATION with Edwidge Danticat & Dr. Ibram X. Kendi		

See pages 9-13 for details about Friday-Sunday sessions

Welcome to the

2023 Kweli Color of Children's Literature Conference!

We're honored you chose to spend the day with us in-person and/or 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 **#Kweli23**. 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 **#Kweli23** faculty/attendee books from our official conference bookseller Word Up Community Bookshop. Kweli will receive a percentage of all sales through these purchases. Support the authors and artists who share their work and talents with us! See the link below.

SEE Events tab at wordupbooks.com

AGENT AND EDITOR CRITIQUES

Manuscript and portfolio reviews will take place by phone or Zoom within two to four weeks of the conference, at the discretion of the reviewer. The 15-minute consultations will take place via phone or video call. We ask that you please depart your session on schedule as editors and agents may be scheduled for a number of critiques per day. For expert advice on how to best synthesize feedback, check out the following link: lindasuepark.com/writing/getting-published/critique/.

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

The Kweli Conference is dedicated to providing a safe, respectful, and harassment-free conference experience for everyone, regardless of gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, body size, race, age, or religion. We will not tolerate

harassment or abuse of conference attendees or presenters in any form. Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately; those judged to violate these guidelines may be expelled from the conference without a refund at the discretion of the conference organizers. Should you wish to report an incident, please notify assistant coordinators Heran Abate, Erasmo Guerra or J.E. Thomas during the day or e-mail kwelijournal@gmail.com afterward.

ANY REMAINING CONCERNS OR QUESTIONS?

Please email events@kwelijournal.org.

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

CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Laura Pegram, Executive Director

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Arely Guzmán

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Chantel Kelly

Deanna Kowal

Ozier Muhammad

J.E. Thomas

Irene Vázquez

Abhi Alwar, Graphic Designer

Cover Art by Magaly Morales, from *The Courage of the Little Hummingbird: A Tale Told Around the World* by Leah Henderson

SAVE THE DATE! #KWELI24 will happen Saturday, April 6, 2024

MULTIMEDIA EVENTS

A MULTIMEDIA EVENT WITH LIVE DANCE

PLÁTANOS GO WITH EVERYTHING

February 26, 1 PM EST | Hosted by Ballet Hispánico
167 West 89th Street



Lissette Norman
AUTHOR





JP Infante
MODERATOR

RSVP with email to:
events@kweljournal.org




A MULTIMEDIA EVENT WITH LIVE DANCE

PLÁTANOS GO WITH EVERYTHING

February 26, 1 PM EST | Hosted by Ballet Hispánico
167 West 89th Street



Mia Bermudez
DANCER



Djassi DaCosta Johnson
CHOREOGRAPHER


RSVP with email to:
events@kweljournal.org





Kweli Color of Children's Literature Pre-Conference Event


SING THE TRUTH

A MULTIMEDIA EVENT WITH LIVE DANCE ADAPTED FROM PICTURE BOOKS





Michaela Goade
ILLUSTRATOR







Aida Salazar
AUTHOR






Emeline Lee
AUTHOR







JP Infante
MODERATOR



Katherine Jimenez
CHOREOGRAPHER

Friday, March 31, 7PM EST | Hosted by Ballet Hispánico | 167 West 89th Street, NYC
Adapted & Choreographed by Katherine Jimenez


RSVP with email to: events@kweljournal.org


—OPENING EVENT OF THE—
Kweli Color of Children's Literature Conference

The COURAGE of the LITTLE HUMMINGBIRD

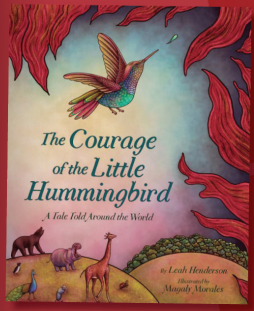
A MULTIMEDIA EVENT WITH LIVE DANCE ADAPTED FROM THE PICTURE BOOK




Leah Henderson
AUTHOR




Djassi DaCosta Johnson
CHOREOGRAPHER






Shayna Dulberger
BASSIST





Makeda Lily Love Roney
DANCER



Tristan Grannum
DANCER

Saturday, April 1, 8:30AM EST
Hosted by Barnard College

The Barnard
English Department
Creative Writing
Program

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Friday, March 31, 2023

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

GRAPHIC NOVEL MASTERCLASS

THE GRAPHIC NOVEL WITH JOHNNIE CHRISTMAS, AUTHOR OF *SWIM TEAM*

Long time Graphic Novelist, author of *SWIM TEAM* and Coretta Scott King Honor Illustrator shows you the fundamentals of making a graphic novel. From initial ideas, character design and development, to scriptwriting, thumbnailing and finished art. You'll learn the many choices that go into making a fully realized graphic novel. Participants will get to try out what they've learned by making a comic page!

MIDDLE GRADE NOVEL MASTERCLASS

WEAVING MAGIC INTO YOUR MG NOVEL WITH REVISION: MASTERCLASS WITH DONNA BARBA HIGUERA, AUTHOR OF *THE LAST CUENTISTA* AND *LUPE WONG WON'T DANCE*

You wrote a first draft...maybe even a second, or third. How do you turn a draft manuscript into one of those treasured books on the shelf of a local bookstore?

Well, the real magic happens in revision. In this master class we will work on revising your novel so magic is actually woven into your manuscript from the very first page to the last. From a strong beginning and infusing the character's voice in each sentence, to pacing and story structure, let's put fresh revision eyes on your next book, so it becomes the kind of book that will give readers goosebumps. Whether you're working on a completed work, or those first few chapters, we will use practical tips, revision tools, and exercises you can store in your writer's arsenal for both current and future projects.

YOUNG ADULT NOVEL MASTERCLASS

REVISING THE YOUNG ADULT NOVEL: MASTERCLASS WITH MALINDA LO, AUTHOR OF *LAST NIGHT AT THE TELEGRAPH CLUB* AND *A SCATTER OF LIGHT*

In this master class, writers will learn how to revise a novel-length work. This class includes nuts-and-bolts tips for how to approach and manage revising a novel, as well as exercises that will help writers focus their vision for their novel, and examples of how to develop authority on a sentence level through multiple drafts. Although it's not necessary for writers to have completed a novel-length draft, it will be useful if they have a novel-length work in progress to consider during the class.

1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

PICTURE BOOKS MASTERCLASS

WRITING AND ILLUSTRATING PICTURE BOOKS: MASTERCLASS WITH MICHAELA GOADE, ILLUSTRATOR OF *REMEMBER BY JOY HARJO* AND *WE ARE WATER PROTECTORS* BY CAROLE LINDSTROM, AND AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR OF *BERRY SONG*

Picture books may seem simple to some readers, but powerful picture books know how to speak to all ages and make a lasting impression. In this class, we'll explore the craft of writing and illustrating for children by discussing the interplay of text and art, the importance of respecting a child's inner world, the revision process, and how to lean into your own experiences for emotionally resonant and compelling storytelling. This class is suited for picture book lovers of every career stage. Whether aspiring or published, you'll learn ways to help your work sing.

NONFICTION MASTERCLASS

NONFICTION: MASTER CLASS WITH MARILYN NELSON, AUTHOR OF *AUGUSTA SAVAGE: THE SHAPE OF A SCULPTOR'S LIFE*

Join Marilyn Nelson for a generative master class exploring the definitions and sizes of courage we have witnessed and studied. We shall use role-playing to explore narratives of courageous character development, and use varied methods for extracting courageous stories from the everyday. Nelson will share brief readings of some of her poems celebrating the true courage of real people at historical turning-points, and comment on differences between writing courage as historical nonfiction, and writing courage from the imagination. At what point can, or do, or may these approaches coincide? The day will include breaks for note-taking.

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

SING THE TRUTH: MULTI-MEDIA EVENT AT BALLET HISPANICO

Featuring: Michaela Goade, Emeline Lee, Aida Salazar, moderated by JP Infante. Choreography by Katherine Jimenez.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Saturday, April 1, 2023

8:30 – 8:45 AM

WELCOME BY LAURA PEGRAM

ADAPTATION OF *THE COURAGE OF THE LITTLE HUMMINGBIRD*: LIVE MUSIC AND DANCE

8:45 – 9:15 AM

KEYNOTE BY LEAH HENDERSON

9:30 – 10:30 AM

A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track

AFROFUTURIST PRACTICE: INVITING THE PAST INTO THE PRESENT

Eve Ewing once stated that “[f]or me, my Afrofuturist practice is inextricable from thinking about the past. I only, in a sense, know how to talk about a future through the lens of talking about history. And so therefore a lot of my work kind of pokes a stick at the boundary between the past, the present and the future and invites the past into the present in what I hope are creative and interesting and provocative ways.” In this session, authors will discuss the interesting and provocative ways they have invited the past into the present in their new and forthcoming work.

Featuring: Jaha Nailah Avery & Ibi Zobii; moderated by Autumn Allen

B. Novels/Memoir Track (YA & MG)

YOU CRACK ME UP: WORKING IN THE HUMOR FOR MIDDLE GRADE & YA

Humor in children’s literature is all about character, setting and timing. How a character reacts to a particular situation can be hysterical...or tragic. Sometimes jokes have a setup on page one, but the punchline comes several pages later. In this session, authors discuss giving characters a worldview and location that can’t help but lead to laughs. Panelists will share tips for writing humor that attendees can use in their own work. During the session, authors will share brief passages that show character, setting and timing coming together in a funny way.

Featuring: Donna Barba Higuera, Patricia Park and J.E. Thomas; moderated by Arely Guzmán

C. Illustrated Books/Nonfiction Track

PASSING IT DOWN

The sharing of family traditions and oral histories is commonplace among marginalized people. In this session, panelists continue the practice, this time passing down specific craft techniques and the wisdom they gleaned from creating their first illustrated book.

Featuring: Hannah Moushabeck and Gwendolyn Wallace; moderated by Cozbi A. Cabrera

10:45 – 11:45 AM

A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track

CREATING A SUSTAINABLE WRITING PRACTICE WITH WELLNESS AT THE CENTER

At Kweli, we want writers and illustrators to succeed “with wellness, and sustainable and sound business practices at the forefront.” Examples include our long time partnership with Monique Greenwood at Akwaaba Inns—wellness space and home of Kweli’s writing and illustration retreats—and our wide embrace of *The Seven Circles, Indigenous Teachings for Living Well* by Chelsey Luger and Those Collins. Panelists Luger and Young will discuss “subtle shifts, like eschewing the word fitness in favor of movement, re-centering nature in all that we do and more.” **Featuring:** Chelsey Luger and Brian Young in conversation

B. Novels/Memoir Track (YA & MG)

MG & YA | THE PLOT THICKENS

Whether you are a pantsier or a plotter, you still need to advance your story through a series of events that challenge your characters and demonstrate growth. In this session, panelists discuss how they developed a compelling plot, step by step, and how they decided which parts of their plot to save, change or eliminate altogether during the revision process. **Featuring:** Lorraine Avila, Angeline Bouley and Brianna Peppins; moderated by Alvina Ling

C. Illustrated Books/Nonfiction Track

PICTURING FAMILY HISTORY

Our family backstories often seep into our creative work unconsciously, but what if you choose to draw from your life story overtly using family archival photographs and interviews. In this session, panelists discuss how they specifically crafted two very personal stories and, in doing so, shed light on overlooked parts of history. **Featuring:** Emeline Lee and Aida Salazar; moderated by Wendi Gu

12:15 – 12:45 PM LUNCH KEYNOTE CONVERSATION WITH JACQUELINE WOODSON & LEAH HENDERSON

1:00 – 2:00 PM

A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track

TAKE SCRAPS AND MAKE UP THE REST

“I like to make up stuff,” said Toni Morrison. “I take scraps, the landscapes of something that happened, and make up the rest.” If your narrative references or builds on an historical event, how do you then take those “scraps,” and use them to imagine complicated fictional character(s) and then set them in a world both beautiful and blemished? **Featuring:** Edwidge Danticat and Ibi Zoboi; moderated by Autumn Allen

B. Novels/Memoir Track (YA & MG)

REVOLUTIONARY ROM-COMS | YA ROMANCE

Meet cutes. Enemies or friends-to-lovers. Fake dating. A main character’s impossible choice between two (or more!) love interests. Rom-com tropes abound. But what makes a YA romantic comedy stand out these days? In this panel, authors share how they infused ethnicity, culture, and identity in their characters’ worldview and discuss whether they faced unique challenges navigating the path from securing an agent to finding a publisher. **Featuring:** Camryn Garrett and Amalie Howard; moderated by Bria Ragin

C. Illustrated Books/Nonfiction Track

WRITE LIKE A PAINTER

“I remember telling the artist Jaune Quick-to-See Smith once that she paints like a writer and I write like a painter,” said U.S. Poet Laureate Joy Harjo. The authors in this session will talk about painting words. We’ll look at the significant details they added to their carefully crafted picture books, each one providing the reader with a beautiful constellation of people, objects and animals **Featuring:** Aya Khalil, Reem Kassis and Traci N. Todd; moderated by Hannah Moushabeck

2:15 – 3:15 PM

A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track

PARTNERING WITH YOUR PUBLISHER FOR YOUR BOOK LAUNCH

It's the worst-kept secret in the world: almost every author dreams of writing a book that sells far more copies than anyone expected. But how should authors partner with publishers striving to make a splash for all of their books, and how can publishers work effectively with authors who have big, big goals when there is a budget to consider? In this session, publishing pros share advice on what works well, what can work better in the author-publisher relationship and what the author can do independently as they think outside of the box or get rid of the box entirely.

Featuring: Antonio Gonzalez Cerna and Hannah Moushabeck; moderated by Sheetal Sheth

B. Novels/Memoir Track

BRIGHT RED FRUIT | WHEN WE WERE SISTERS

Using excerpts from the forthcoming novel-in-verse *Bright Red Fruit* and the recently released *When We Were Sisters* as a springboard, the panelists will lead a discussion on craft.

Featuring: Safia Elhillo & Fatimah Asghar

C. Illustrated Books & Nonfiction Track

WRITING PEN & PAINTBRUSH: TIPS FROM AUTHOR-ILLUSTRATORS

Author-Illustrators spanning multiple genres in children's books will share their individual process of imagining, writing and drawing based on their own unique rhythms.

Featuring: Cozbi A. Cabrera, Johnnie Christmas and Lynnor Bontigao; moderated by Michaela Goade

3:30 – 4:00 PM

KEYNOTE CONVERSATION WITH ANDREA L. ROGERS & IRENE VÁZQUEZ

4:15 – 5:15 PM

CLOSING KEYNOTE WITH MALINDA LO

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Sunday, April 2, 2023

9:15 AM

WELCOME BY LAURA PEGRAM

9:30 – 10:30 AM

A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track

BUSINESS OF PUBLISHING

This session will cover, in part, the major terms of a publishing offer and contract. It will be a lecture (with PowerPoint) followed by an opportunity for people to ask questions. **Featuring:** Cheryl Klein

B. Craft Track (YA & MG)

VOICE AND AUDIENCE: FIRST PAGES

Attention has never been more fleeting. Often authors only have a single page—or a single paragraph—to capture readers' attention. This is true for both fiction and nonfiction. In this session, panelists will discuss the importance of creating a strong voice to immerse readers in the world authors have envisioned and reference books that stand out in this regard. Attendees will leave with actionable tools they can use to evaluate and revise works-in-progress before submission to editors and publishers. **Featuring:** Arthur Levine, Allie Levick, Jas Perry and Phoebe Yeh; moderated by Arely Guzmán

C. Illustrated Books & Nonfiction Track

GRAPHIC NOVEL: PITCH AND PROCESS

We are experiencing a new golden age of graphic novels, fueled by readers' insatiable hunger for this medium. Sales of comics and graphic novels jumped 62% in 2021! Yet for many authors and illustrators the process of creating a graphic novel is shrouded in mystery and enigma. How do you start? How do you craft a pitch for agents and editors? Join us as we draw back the curtain and dive into the nuts and bolts of the process. **Featuring:** Nidhi Chanani and Victoria Ying; moderated by Nadine Takvorian

10:45 – 11:45 AM

A. Publishing, Community & Culture Track

FANTASY

I feel very strongly that I, personally, live at a very clear crossroads between history and memory and mythology," said Daniel José Older. "And I think that we all do. I think that when we start to throw those things into a crossroads together, it really does open the lie that there is one singular truth. Let's become more playful with what happened and how nations were born and how borders were drawn and why the sun rises. Those are all questions of mythology. And they are all questions of history. We need to be playful when we look at them because we don't have the true-truth. That's gone. That disappeared the moment that it happened. And yet the past is always with us and we're constantly moving with history. History is always walking by our side." As fantasy authors, we are reimagining fairytales, creating stories inspired by myth, sending characters out to battle demons or befriend sea creatures. The panelists in this session are often playful with tropes and clichés as they work with craft and technique. Attendees will learn how these authors go about creating the deftly woven worlds and people their readers come to love. **Featuring:** Kalynn Bayron, Natasha Bowen, Roseanne A. Brown, Lisa Stringfellow; moderated by Rosemary Brosnan

B. Craft Track (YA & MG)

PARAGRAPHS

Few things are more exciting than hearing the written word read aloud. In this first-of-its-kind session, actors at the top of their craft read the opening paragraphs of some of our faculty's most recent works. An editor will then ask each actor to consider questions of character and conflict. **Featuring:** Actors Imani Lee Williams and Sheetal Sheth; moderated by Arely Guzmán

C. Illustrated Books & Nonfiction Track

THE COMMUNITY THAT BINDS

It's often said that books are both mirrors and windows for readers. For some, books validate their culture. For others, books provide honest and nuanced views of others' lived experiences. In this session, panelists discuss how they portray their culture in their work. **Featuring:** Brandon Hobson, Nasugraq Rainey Hopson and Kim Rogers; moderated by Kenzie Allen

11:45 – 12:15 PM LUNCH BREAK

12:30 – 1:30 PM

NOVEL-IN-VERSE CRAFT TALK

Amber McBride will present a craft talk on the novel in verse using *Me (Moth)*. *Me (Moth)* has a splash of Hoodoo, a little magic and a lot of heart. **Featuring:** Amber McBride

1:45 – 2:45 PM

MARKETING: NOT AS SCARY AS YOU MAY THINK

It's undeniable. Authors need a strong online presence now more than ever. But what if you don't want to spend hours every day on social media? During this session, you will receive practical tips on how to create an appealing visual brand, effectively engage with young readers and their parents, and increase visibility through marketing and publicity efforts—without being permanently tethered to your social media accounts. The discussion will also cover the unique challenges faced by children's authors in the digital age and the importance of a strategic online presence to create a lasting impact on their target audience. **Featuring:** Fauzia Burke and J.E. Thomas in conversation

3:00 – 4:00 PM

IMPRINTS

Imprints are much more than a publishing house's marketing strategy. Imprint curators and editors are exceptional creators who bring deep knowledge of craft and audience to their work. In this session, panelists will share what they hope to accomplish with their imprints and what they're looking for in submissions. **Featuring:** John Jennings, Kwame Mbalia and Linda Sue Park; moderated by Phoebe Yeh

4:15 – 5:25 PM

CLOSING KEYNOTE CONVERSATION

Featuring: Edwidge Danticat and Dr. Ibram X. Kendi

Kweli

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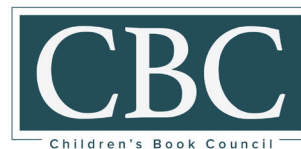
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Autumn Allen Senior Editor, Barefoot Books

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As a senior editor at Barefoot Books, Autumn Allen acquires, edits and art directs picture books and board books. Autumn's debut young adult novel, *All You Have to Do*, due out from Kokila in fall, 2023, follows two young Black men at prestigious, historically white schools trying to connect with movements for Black liberation in 1968 and 1995. Her debut picture book, *Step on Board*, illustrated by Ekua Holmes, is due out from Knopf in 2025. Autumn teaches children's literature at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and consults on using diverse books to discuss race and justice with children.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Our World: Brazil* by Ana Siqueira, illustrated by Ana Matsusaki

Next Book to Watch For: *All You Have to Do*, August 29, 2023

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Tagging Freedom*, Rhonda Roumani

- » Seeking: Picture book manuscript, Picture book dummies, Illustration portfolios
- » To submit: Send polished manuscripts as Microsoft Word attachments to autumn.allen@barefootbooks.com. Include "Kweli 23" in the subject line, and a *brief* pitch and bio in the body of the email.



Kenzie Allen

she/her/hers | kenzieallen.co | [@cerena](https://www.instagram.com/cerena)

Kenzie Allen is a Haudenosaunee poet and multimodal artist; she is a first-generation descendant of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. Kenzie is the recipient of a 92NY "Discovery" Prize, the James Welch Prize for Indigenous Poets, the 49th Parallel Award in Poetry, and her manuscript, *Cloud Missives*, was a finalist for the National Poetry Series in 2022. Her work can be found in *POETRY*, *Narrative* magazine, *The Paris Review's The Daily*, *Poets.org*, *Best New Poets* and other venues. Born in West Texas, she is currently an Assistant Professor in Indigenous Literatures and Creative Writing at York University in Toronto.

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Elatsoe* by Darcie Little Badger



Fatimah Asghar

they/them/theirs | fatimahasghar.com | [@asghartheGrouch](https://www.instagram.com/asghartheGrouch)

Fatimah Asghar is a writer and filmmaker. In 2011 they created a spoken word poetry group in Bosnia and Herzegovina while on a Fulbright studying theater in post-genocidal countries. They are the writer and co-creator of *Brown Girls*, an Emmy-Nominated web series. A Ruth Lilly and Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Fellow, they were also featured on the 2017 *Forbes*' 30 Under 30 list. They are the author of *If They Come For Us* (One World, 2018). They are the co-editor of *Halal If You Hear Me*, an anthology that celebrates Muslim writers who are also women, queer, gender nonconforming and/or trans.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *When We Were Sisters* (2022)



Jaha Nailah Avery

she/her/hers

Jaha Nailah Avery is an African American woman and proud Southerner. Hailing from Asheville, North Carolina, she received her law degree from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she studied constitutional law. She spent time in the startup tech space before embarking on her professional writing career, and her work can be found in *The New York Times*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Architectural Digest*. She's a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. and a Diamond Life member of the NAACP. Her aim is to always celebrate and preserve the stories of Black people, culture, and history.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Those Who Saw The Sun* is my debut work, coming May 16th.



Lorraine Avila

she/they | Lorraineavila.com | [@lorraineavila_](https://www.instagram.com/@lorraineavila_) | [@lorraineavila_](https://twitter.com/@lorraineavila_)

Lorraine Avila (she/they) is a storyteller and educator from the Bronx with Caribbean roots. Her mission is to continue to rupture traditions of silence. She is the author of *Malcriada and Other Stories*, *Celestial Summer*, and *The Making of Yolanda La Bruja* (forthcoming Spring 2023 from Levine Querido). Avila has a BA in English from Fordham University, an MAT in Teaching from NYU, & an MFA in fiction from the University of Pittsburgh.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Making of Yolanda La Bruja*

Next Book to Watch For: *The Making of Yolanda La Bruja* (April 11, 2023)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *If An Egyptian Cannot Speak English* by Noor Naga



Kalynn Bayron

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

Kalynn Bayron is the *New York Times* and Indie bestselling author of the YA fantasy novels *Cinderella Is Dead* and *This Poison Heart*. Her latest works include the YA fantasy *This Wicked Fate* and the middle grade paranormal adventure *The Vanquishers*. She is a CILIP Carnegie Medal Nominee, a three-time CYBILS Award nominee, a LOCUS Award finalist, and the recipient of the 2022 Randall Kenan Award for Black LGBTQ fiction. She is a classically trained vocalist and musical theater enthusiast. When she's not writing you can find her watching scary movies and spending time with her family.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *My Dear Henry: A Jekyll & Hyde Remix*

Next Book to Watch For: *You're Not Supposed To Die Tonight* (YA Horror out June 20th, 2023)



Lynnor Bontigao

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Lynnor Bontigao stapled her first illustrated story at the age of 10 in the Philippines. She is the author-illustrator of *Sari-Sari Summers*, her debut picture book with Candlewick Press. She is also the illustrator of *The World's Best Class Plant* written by award-winning authors Liz Garton Scanlon & Audrey Vernick, as well as *You Are Revolutionary* by Cindy Wang Brandt of the popular podcast, Parenting Forward. Lynnor is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators and the winner of the 2020 SCBWI Tomie dePaola Professional Development Award, and the 2020 SCBWI/Kweli Emerging Voice Award. Lynnor Bontigao lives in Roselle Park, NJ with her family and 1 tiny dog.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Sari-Sari Summers* (Candlewick Press)

Next Book to Watch For: *The World's Best Class Plant* (Illustrator) PUTNAM/PRH 05/30/2023

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Holding On* by Sophia N Lee, Isabelle Roxas



Angeline Bouley

she/her/hers | angelinebouley.com | [@angelinebouley](https://www.instagram.com/@angelinebouley) | [@fineangeline](https://twitter.com/@fineangeline)

Angeline Bouley (Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians) is a storyteller who writes about her Ojibwe community in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Her debut novel, *Firekeeper's Daughter*, was an instant #1 *New York Times* bestseller, received both the Printz and Morris awards from the American Library Association. A Reese's YA Book Club selection, it is being adapted for a Netflix series by the Obamas' Higher Ground Productions. Her follow-up novel, *Warrior Girl Unearthed*, will be available in May. Angeline lives in southwest Michigan but her heart will always be on Sugar Island.

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

Next Book to Watch For: *Warrior Girl Unearthed* (May 2, 2023)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *The Marrow Thieves* by Cherie Dimaline



Natasha Bowen

she/her/hers | natashabowen.com | [@skinofthesea](https://twitter.com/@skinofthesea)

Natasha Bowen is a *New York Times* bestselling author, a teacher, and a mother of three children. She is of Nigerian and Welsh descent and lives in Cambridge, England, where she grew up. Natasha studied English and creative writing at Bath Spa University before moving to East London, where she taught for nearly ten years. She is obsessed with Japanese and German stationery and spends stupid amounts on notebooks, which she then features on her secret Instagram. When she's not writing, she's reading, watched over carefully by Milk and Honey, her cat and dog. Follow her on Twitter at @skinofthesea.



Rosemary Brosnan Vice President and Publisher, Quill Tree Books/Heartdrum, Imprints of HarperCollins Children's Books

she/her/hers | diversebooks.org/programs/heartdrum | [@RosemaryHB](https://twitter.com/RosemaryHB)

Rosemary Brosnan is publisher of the Quill Tree Books and Heartdrum imprints at HarperCollins Children's Books. Throughout her career, she has been committed to publishing diverse voices. Authors and illustrators Brosnan has worked with under the Heartdrum imprint include Christine Day (Upper Skagit), Jen Ferguson (Métis) Dawn Quigley (Ojibwe), Kim Rogers (Wichita), Cynthia Leitich Smith (Muscogee and Author-Curator of Heartdrum), and debut author Brian Young (Diné). Other authors Brosnan has published include Elizabeth Acevedo, Kwame Alexander, Ernesto Cisneros, Dhonielle Clayton (and the team that wrote *Blackout* and *Whiteout*), Pat Cummings, Saadia Faruqi, Neil Gaiman, Nadia Hashimi, Walter Dean Myers, Neal Shusterman, Lisa Stringfellow, and Rita Williams-Garcia.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Summer of Bitter and Sweet* by Jen Ferguson (Heartdrum)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Harvest House* by Cynthia Leitich Smith (coming April 11)

- » Seeking: Picture book manuscript, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Realistic contemporary, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Mystery, Romance, Historical, Rhyming text/Poetry, Graphic novels
- » To submit: Attendees (including unagented attendees) may submit to me for two months following the conference. Full picture book manuscripts; query + three sample chapters for novels.



Fauzia Burke

she/her/hers | FauziaBurke.com | [@FauziaBurke](https://twitter.com/FauziaBurke) | [Fauzia S. Burke](https://facebook.com/FauziaS.Burke)

Fauzia Burke, author of *Online Marketing for Busy Authors*, is the founder and president of FSB Associates, an online book publicity firm, co-founder of Pub Site, a platform for building author websites, and a consultant and coach for authors who need help navigating the book marketing and publicity landscape. Before starting FSB, she worked for Henry Holt and John Wiley. Fauzia has promoted books by authors such as Alan Alda, Arianna Huffington, Deepak Chopra, Melissa Francis, S. C. Gwynne, Mika Brzezinski, Charles Spencer and many more. She is based in San Diego, CA. For online publicity, book publishing and social media advice, follow Fauzia on Twitter (@FauziaBurke) and on Facebook (Fauzia S. Burke). More information can be found at www.FauziaBurke.com



Roseanne A. Brown

she/her/hers | roseanneabrown.com | [@rosiesrambles](https://twitter.com/rosiesrambles)

Roseanne A. Brown is an immigrant from the West African nation of Ghana and a graduate of the University of Maryland, where she completed the Jimenez-Porter Writers' House program. Her debut novel *A Song of Wraiths and Ruin* was an instant *New York Times* Bestseller, an Indie Bestseller, and received six starred reviews. Her newest novel, *Serwa Boateng's Guide to Vampire Hunting*, came out Fall 2022 with Rick Riordan Presents. She has worked with Marvel, Star Wars, and Disney among other publishers. You can visit her online at roseanneabrown.com or on Instagram or Twitter at @rosiesrambles.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Serwa Boateng's Guide to Vampire Hunting* (September 6th, 2022; Rick Riordan Presents/Disney-Hyperion)

Next Book to Watch For: *Serwa Boateng's Guide to Witchcraft and Mayhem* (September 12th; 2023; Rick Riordan Presents/Disney-Hyperion)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Deborah Falaye



Cozbi Cabrera

she/her/hers | cozbi.com | [@cozbi](https://twitter.com/cozbi)

Cozbi A. Cabrera is the author/illustrator of *Me & Mama* (2021 Coretta Scott King Honor/Caldecott Honor) and *My Hair is a Garden* deemed by *Kirkus* as "how needed, how refreshing." Her star reviewed illustrated titles include *Chef Edna* by Melvina Noel, *Exquisite: The Poetry and Life of Gwendolyn Brooks* by Suzanne Slade (2021 ALA Sibert Informational Award Honor/Coretta Scott King Honor), *Most Loved In All The World* by Tonya Cherie Hegamin, *Stitchin' and Pullin' A Gees Bend Quilt* by Patricia McKissack, *Thanks A Million* by Nikki Grimes. Cozbi has been a contributing illustrator for various titles including *Our Children Can Soar* by Michelle Cook (NAACP Image Award). Cozbi was awarded a Beinecke Library Fellowship at Yale University (2022-2023).



Antonio Gonzalez Cerna *Levine Querido, Marketing Director*
he/him/his

Antonio Gonzalez Cerna is the Marketing Director at Levine Querido. He has 18 years experience developing marketing, advertising, and social media strategies for adult and children’s book publishers such as Hachette Book Group, Penguin Books USA, and Scholastic, as well as for non-profit institutions including the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and Lambda Literary Foundation. An advocate for diversity, inclusion, and equality, he has proudly served on the Children’s Book Council Diversity Committee, Lambda Literary Awards Host Committee, and is a founding member of Latinx in Publishing.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Many Assassinations of Samir, the Seller of Dreams*

Next Book to Watch For: *The Secret Summer Promise* by Keah Brown (May)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Molly Mendoza



Nidhi Chanani
she/her/hers | everydayloveart.com | [@nidhiart](https://www.instagram.com/@nidhiart)

Nidhi Chanani was born in Kolkata, India and raised in California. She holds a degree in literature from the University of California, Santa Cruz. She creates illustrations that capture love in everyday moments. In 2012 she was honored by the Obama Administration as a Champion of Change. She’s the author of the graphic novels *Pashmina* (2017), *Jukebox* (2021), *Shark Princess* (2022) and the picture book *What Will My Story Be?*. She’s illustrated a number of picture books including *I will be fierce*, *Strong* and *Binny’s Diwali*. Nidhi draws in the San Francisco Bay Area with her husband and kid.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Shark Princess*

Next Book to Watch For: *Super Boba Café*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Gengoroh Tagame



Johnnie Christmas
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Johnnie Christmas is a #1 *New York Times* Best Selling graphic novelist. His 2022 middle grade graphic novel debut *Swim Team* earned a spot on the National Book Awards longlist and a Harvey Awards nomination. He’s currently hard at work on two new middle-grade graphic novels for the HarperAlley imprint of HarperCollins. Writer of the Image Comics sci-fi series *Tartarus* and *Crema*, a haunted romance published by Comixology. His book *Firebug* received a starred review from *Publisher’s Weekly* and it earned him a Joe Shuster Outstanding Cartoonist nomination. He’s perhaps best known for co-creating the series *Angel Catbird* with celebrated writer Margaret Atwood and adapting William Gibson’s lost screenplay for *Alien 3* into a critically acclaimed graphic novel of the same name. His credits also include co-creating the pre-apocalyptic thriller *Sheltered*. A graduate of the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY, earning a BFA in Communication Design/Illustration. Johnnie makes Vancouver, BC his home.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Swim Team*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *His Name Is George Floyd* by Samuels and Olorunnipa



Edwidge Danticat
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Edwidge Danticat is the author of several books, including *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, *The Farming of Bones*, and the novels-in-stories, *The Dew Breaker*, *Claire of the Sea Light*, as well as *Brother, I’m Dying*, a National Book Award finalist and National Books Critics Circle winner for autobiography. She is also the editor of *The Butterfly’s Way: Voices from the Haitian Diaspora in the United States*, *Haiti Noir*, and *Haiti Noir 2*. She has written seven books for young adults and children, as well as a travel narrative, *After the Dance, A Walk Through Carnival in Jacmel*, and a collection of essays, *Create Dangerously*. She is a 2009 MacArthur Fellow, and a 2020 winner of the Vilcek Prize. Her most recent book, *Everything Inside: Stories*, is a winner of the The Story Prize, and the National Books Critics Circle Fiction Prize.



Safia Elhillo
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Safia Elhillo is the author of *The January Children* (University of Nebraska Press, 2017), which received the the Sillerman First Book Prize for African Poets and an Arab American Book Award, *Girls That Never Die* (One World/Random House 2022), and the novel in verse *Home Is Not A Country* (Make Me A World/Random House, 2021). With Fatimah Asghar, she is co-editor of the anthology *Halal If You Hear Me* (Haymarket Books, 2019). She is currently a Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford University and lives in Oakland.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Girls That Never Die*

Next Book to Watch For: *Bright Red Fruit* (October 2023)

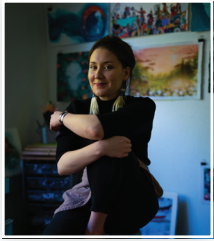


Camryn Garrett

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Camryn Garrett was born and raised in New York. In 2019, she was named one of *Teen Vogue's* 21 Under 21 and a Glamour College Woman of the Year. Her first novel, *Full Disclosure*, received rave reviews from outlets such as *Entertainment Weekly*, the Today Show, and *The Guardian*, which called a “warm, funny and thoughtfully sex-positive, an impressive debut from a writer still in her teens.” Her second novel, *Off the Record* received three starred reviews. Her third novel, *Friday I'm in Love*, was an IndieNext Pick and received a starred review from *Publisher's Weekly*. Camryn is also interested in film and recently graduated from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. You can find her on Twitter @dancingofpens, tweeting from a laptop named Stevie.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Friday I'm in Love*



Michaela Goade

she/her/hers | michaelagoade.com | [@michaelagoade](https://www.instagram.com/michaelagoade) [@MichaelaGoade](https://www.facebook.com/MichaelaGoade) [@MichaelaGoade](https://twitter.com/MichaelaGoade)

Michaela Goade is a Caldecott Medalist and #1 *New York Times* bestselling artist of books for children. She is the illustrator of a number of award-winning and bestselling books including *We Are Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom, *I Sang You Down from the Stars* by Tasha Spillett-Sumner, and her first self-authored book, *Berry Song*. Michaela's latest book, *Remember* written by Joy Harjo, was recently released in March 2023. Michaela is an enrolled member of the Tlingit Nation and grew up on her ancestral homelands along the southeast coast of Alaska, where she lives today on an island at the edge of a wide, wild sea.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Remember* by Joy Harjo published by Penguin Random House (will be published 3/21/2023)

Next Book to Watch For: *Being Home* (spring 2024)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *The Tao of Raven* by Ernestine Hayes



Wendi Gu *Literary Agent, Sanford J. Greenburger Associates/GreenburgerKids*

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

Wendi Gu is a children's book literary agent at Sanford J. Greenburger Associates. She's lucky to represent voice-driven authors and dynamic visual artists. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband and dog, Beanie Gu.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Joy Takes Root* by Gwendolyn Wallace, illustrated by Ashleigh Corrin



Arely Guzmán *Assistant Editor, Levine Querido*

they/them/theirs

Arely Guzmán is an Assistant Editor at Levine Querido. Previously, they were an editorial assistant at Knopf Books for Young Readers, and an editorial intern at Bloomsbury, Writers House, and Kweli Journal. They're looking for middle grade and young adult books that will reverberate with the in-between communities, and fantastic stories for children who never saw themselves as protagonists. On their spare time, Arely can be found watching little gay cartoons, killing all their plants, and advocating that therapy should be accessible and inclusive.

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *The Magic Fish*

- » Seeking: Picture book manuscript, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Nonfiction, Realistic contemporary, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Mystery, Romance, Rhyming text/Poetry, Graphic novels
- » To submit: Please send a pitch and sample to arely@levinequerido.com



Leah Henderson

she/her/hers | leahhendersonbooks.com | [@Leahs_Mark](https://www.instagram.com/Leahs_Mark) | [@LeahsMark](https://www.facebook.com/LeahsMark) [@LeahsMark](https://twitter.com/LeahsMark)

Leah Henderson is the author of many books for young readers including *The Magic in Changing Your Stars*, *A Day for Rememberin'*, *Daddy Speaks Love*, *Together We March* and the forthcoming picture book *The Courage of the Little Hummingbird*. When she isn't creating stories, she is out in the world exploring, in search of them. Leah holds an MFA in Writing and is on faculty in Spalding University's graduate writing program.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Daddy Speaks Love*, Nancy Paulsen Books

Next Book to Watch For: *The Courage of the Little Hummingbird*, Abrams (April 11th)



Donna Barba Higuera

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Donna Barba Higuera's Middle Grade and Picture books reinvent history, folklore, and or her own life experience into compelling storylines. She lives in Washington State with her husband, four kids, three dogs and a frog.

Her books include *Lupe Wong Won't Dance*, *El Cucuy Is Scared, Too!*, *The Last Cuentista*, and *The Yellow Handkerchief*, and have won awards including: the Newbery medal, both Pura Belpré medal and honor, PNBA best book of the year award, and the Sid Fleischman award for best children's humor book of the year.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Last Cuentista*

Next Book to Watch For: *The Yellow Handkerchief/El Pañuelo Amarillo*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Eagle Drums*- Nasuqraq Rainey Hopson (9/2-23)



Brandon Hobson

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Brandon Hobson is the author of four books for adults, including the acclaimed novel *The Removed* and the National Book Award finalist *Where the Dead Sit Talking*. *The Storyteller* is his debut novel for teens, "a kaleidoscopic middle-grade adventure that mixes the anxieties, friendships, and wonders of a Cherokee boy's life with Cherokee history and lore." In 2022 Hobson was chosen as a Guggenheim fellow. He teaches creative writing at New Mexico State University and at the Institute of American Indian Arts and is an enrolled citizen of the Cherokee Nation Tribe of Oklahoma. Dr. Hobson lives in New Mexico with his wife and two kids.



Amalie Howard

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AMALIE HOWARD is a *USA Today* and *Publishers Weekly* bestselling novelist. *Always Be My Duchess* was one of *Cosmopolitan Magazine's* 30 Best Romance Books of 2022 and *The Beast of Beswick* was one of Oprah Daily's 24 Best Historical Romance Novels to Read. She is also the author of several critically acclaimed, award-winning young adult novels. *Kirkus Reviews* called her forthcoming *Queen Bee* "A satisfyingly delightful tale of deception, retribution, and romance." A Caribbean-born AAPI writer, her books have been featured in *The Hollywood Reporter*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and *Seventeen Magazine*. When she's not writing, she can usually be found reading, being the president of her one-woman Harley Davidson motorcycle club, or power-napping. She lives in Colorado with her family.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Always Be My Duchess* (adult historical romance, Forever/Grand Central), *The Duke In Question* (adult historical romance, Sourcebooks), *Queen Bee* (young adult, out 4/4/23, Joy Revolution/Penguin Random House)

Next Book to Watch For: *Queen Bee*, 4/4/23

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Dhonielle Clayton, *The Marvellers*



John Jennings

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John Jennings is a professor, author, graphic novelist, curator, Harvard Fellow, *New York Times* Bestseller, 2018 Eisner Winner, and all-around champion of Black culture. As Professor of Media and Cultural Studies at the University of California at Riverside (UCR), Jennings examines the visual culture of race in various media forms including film, illustrated fiction, and comics and graphic novels. He is also the director of Abrams ComicArts imprint Megascope, which publishes graphic novels focused on the experiences of people of color. His research interests include the visual culture of Hip Hop, Afrofuturism and politics, Visual Literacy, Horror, and the EthnoGothic, and Speculative Design and its applications to visual rhetoric. Jennings is co-founder/organizer of The Schomburg Center's Black Comic Book Festival in Harlem.



Reem Kassis

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Reem Kassis is a Palestinian food and culture writer. Her work regularly appears in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Atlantic* in addition to various newspapers, magazines and academic journals. She is also the author of the award-winning cookbooks *The Palestinian Table* (2017) and *The Arabesque Table* (2021). She grew up in Jerusalem, then obtained her undergraduate and MBA degrees from UPenn and Wharton and her MSc in social psychology from the London School of Economics. She now lives in Philadelphia with her husband and three daughters. *We Are Palestinian* is her first children's book.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *We Are Palestinian: A Celebration of Culture and Tradition*



Ibram X. Kendi

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DR. IBRAM X. KENDI is a National Book Award-winning author of thirteen books for adults and children, including nine New York Times bestsellers—five of which were #1 *New York Times* bestsellers. Dr. Kendi is the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Boston University, and the director of the BU Center for Antiracist Research. He is a contributing writer at *The Atlantic* and a CBS News racial justice contributor.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Making of Butterflies* (3/7/23)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Jesmyn Ward



Aya Khalil

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Aya Khalil is the award-winning author of *The Arabic Quilt: An Immigrant Story*, which is an NCTE's Charlotte Huck Award Recommended Book and the winner of the Arab American Book Award, among other honors. She's also the author of *Our World: Egypt*, *The Night Before Eid* and *The Great Banned Books Bake Sale*. Aya holds a master's degree in education and is a Highlights Muslim Storytellers fellow and co-founder of Kidlit in Color. She immigrated from Egypt to the United States when she was young and currently lives with her partner and three children in Northwest Ohio. Visit her online at: ayakhalil.com

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Our World: Egypt*

Next Book to Watch For: *The Night Before Eid*, March 7th, *The Great Banned Books Bake Sale* (Aug. 1)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: M.O. Yuksel, *In My Mosque*



Cheryl Klein *Editorial Director, Algonquin Young Readers, an imprint of Workman Publishing / Hachette Book Group*

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Cheryl Klein is the editorial director at Algonquin Young Readers, an imprint of Workman Publishing / Hachette Book Group, where she oversees books for all ages. She formerly served as editorial director at Lee & Low Books & Arthur A. Levine Books/ Scholastic, where her titles included *Speculation* by Nisi Shawl, *When Aidan Became a Brother* by Kyle Lukoff & Kaylani Juanita, & *Front Desk* by Kelly Yang. Cheryl is also the author of *The Magic Words: Writing Great Books for Children and Young Adults* and four picture books, most recently *Hamsters Make Terrible Roommates*, illustrated by Abhi Alwar.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Speculation* by Nisi Shawl.

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *How You Grow Wings* by Rimma Onoseta

- » Seeking: Picture book manuscript, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Nonfiction, Realistic contemporary, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Mystery, Romance, Historical, Rhyming text/Poetry, Illustration portfolios
- » To submit: Send a cover letter followed by up to ten pages of material, all pasted into the body of an email, to CBKedit@gmail.com, by October 1. Put KWELI 2023, the title & your name in the subject line.



Emeline Lee

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Emeline Lee is an author of children's literature. Her debut picture book, *Bonnie's Rocket*, illustrated by Alina Chau and published by Lee & Low, is a STEM-friendly story set during Apollo 11. She studied English literature and environmental sustainability at Columbia University and now works in the renewable energy sector in New York City. Find her on the web at emelinelee.com and follow her on social media at [@EmelineLeeBooks](https://twitter.com/EmelineLeeBooks).

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Bonnie's Rocket* by Emeline Lee and illustrated by Alina Chau, published by Lee & Low Books

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Julie Flett



Alexandra Levick *Senior Agent, Writers House*

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Alexandra Levick is a senior literary agent at Writers House developing her picture book, middle grade, young adult, and adult lists. Previously, she worked with the agency at large as the Media Rights Manager for film and tv and for several other senior agents. Prior to joining Writers House, she worked as a bookseller and worked on the house side of the publishing business in publicity. She holds an M.S. in Publishing from New York University and a B.A. in English, with a concentration in Creative Writing from the University of Rochester.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *That Self-Same Metal* by Brittany N. Williams

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: I'm obsessed with the *Love Sugar Magic* trilogy by Anna Meriano!

- » Seeking: Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Realistic contemporary, Science Fiction & Fantasy
- » To submit: Please send your query letter and the first 25 pages (as an attachment) to alevick@writershouse.com. Please include a reference to Kweli in the subject line, as well!



Arthur A. Levine *President and Editor-in-Chief*
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Arthur A. Levine is the founder of Levine Querido, an independent publisher dedicated to finding and publishing brilliantly illustrated and written books from a diverse spectrum of creators across the U.S. and around the world including Newbery Medalist Donna Barba Higuera, Printz medalist Daniel Nayeri, Printz honor medalist Eric Gansworth, Darcie Little Badger, Shaun Tan, Walter Award winner Andrea Rogers and more. He is proud of a career-long commitment to inclusion and representation, publishing such great writers and illustrators as Lisa Yee, Alaya Dawn Johnson, Andrea Wang, Sacha Lamb, Cat Min, Sundee Frazier, Mari Lowe, Young Vo and many others.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Many Assassinations of Samir, the Seller of Dreams* by Daniel Nayeri

Next Book to Watch For: *Wild Poppies* by Haya Saleh

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Jovita Wore Pants* by Aida Salazar

- » Seeking: Picture book manuscript, 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: We are open. See our guidelines at www.levinequerido.com



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

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *This Is Not My Home* by Eugenia Yoh and Vivienne Chang

Next Book to Watch For: *Chinese Menu: The History, Myths, And Legends Behind Your Favorite Foods* by Grace Lin (September 12, 2023)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story* by Kevin Noble Maillard

- » Seeking: Picture book manuscript, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Nonfiction, Realistic contemporary, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Mystery, Romance, Historical, Rhyming text/Poetry, Graphic novels, Illustration portfolios
- » To submit: Query letters only (no full manuscripts) should be emailed to: LBYR.query@hbgusa.com

Please put "for Alvina Ling from KWELL attendee" in the subject line. If you are an illustrator, feel free to attach illustration samples, but otherwise, the query letter should just be in the body of the email.

I'll accept query letters for three months from the date of the conference (7/1/23).

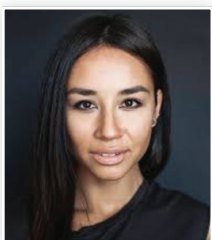
I will accept queries for picture book texts or dummies, middle grade and young adult, all genres (fantasy, science fiction, mystery, historical). Nonfiction only if it has a trade (bookstore) appeal.

One query per attendee, please.



Malinda Lo
she/her/hers | malindalo.com | [@malindalo](https://twitter.com/malindalo) | malindalo.tumblr.com | YouTube: [@malindalovideo](https://www.youtube.com/@malindalovideo) | [f](https://www.facebook.com/malindalo)

Malinda Lo is the *New York Times* bestselling author of seven novels, including *A Scatter of Light* (2022). Her novel *Last Night at the Telegraph Club* won the National Book Award, the Stonewall Book Award, the Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature, a Printz Honor, and was an LA Times Book Prize finalist. Her books have received 15 starred reviews and have been finalists for multiple awards, including the Andre Norton Award and the Lambda Literary Award. She has been honored by the Carnegie Corporation as a Great Immigrant.



Chelsey Luger
she/her/hers | chelseyluger.com | [@chelsey.moves](https://twitter.com/chelsey.moves)

Chelsey Luger is a writer and wellness advocate originally from North Dakota, an enrolled member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa and descendant of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. She got her undergraduate degree at Dartmouth College, concentrating on comparative histories of global Indigenous cultures, and later earned an M.S. in Digital Media at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. She is the co-founder of Well For Culture. Her writing has appeared in the *Atlantic*, *Huffington Post*, *Yes! Magazine*, and other outlets. With warmth and generosity—and 75 atmospheric photographs by Collins throughout—*The Seven Circles* teaches us how to connect with nature, with our community, and with ourselves, and to integrate ancient Indigenous philosophies of health and well being into our own lives to find healing and balance.



Kwame Mbalia

he/him/his | kwamembalia.com | [@ksekoum](https://twitter.com/@ksekoum)

Kwame is a husband, father, writer, a *New York Times* bestselling author, a former pharmaceutical metrologist, and a publisher with Freedom Fire Books, an imprint of Disney-Hyperion. His debut middle-grade novel, *Tristan Strong Punches A Hole In The Sky* was awarded a Coretta Scott King Author Honor, and it—along with the sequels *Tristan Strong Destroys The World* and *Tristan Strong Keeps Punching*—is published by Rick Riordan Presents/Disney-Hyperion. He is the co-author of *Last Gate Of The Emperor* with Prince Joel Makonnen, from Scholastic Books, and the editor of the #1 *New York Times* bestselling anthology *Black Boy Joy*, published by Delacorte Press. A Howard University graduate and a Midwesterner now in North Carolina, he survives on Dad jokes and Cheezits.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Tristan Strong*, the graphic novel



Amber McBride

she/her/hers | amber-mcbride.com | [@ambsmcbride](https://twitter.com/@ambsmcbride)

Amber McBride estimates she reads about 100 books a year. Her work has been published in literary magazines including *Ploughshares* and *Provincetown Arts*. Her debut young adult novel, *Me (Moth)* was a finalist for the National Book Award, and won the 2022 Coretta Scott King/John Steptoe Award for New Talent, among many other accolades. She is a professor of creative writing at University of Virginia, and lives in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *We Are All So Good At Smiling*

Next Book to Watch For: *Gone Wolf* (October 3, 2023)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *The Minus One Club* by Kekla Magoon



Sydnee Monday Associate Editor/Kokila

she/they | penguin.com/kokila-books-overview | [@sydneemonday](https://twitter.com/@sydneemonday)

Associate Editor Sydnee Monday joined Kokila in May of 2018. Her growing list features children's lit debuts from Keah Brown, Kiera Wright-Ruiz, Rinny Perkins, and more. Prior to Kokila, they worked at *NPR*, the PEN/Faulkner Foundation, and Sankofa Bookstore in Washington, D.C. She's a graduate of Howard University.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *You Gotta Meet Mr. Pierce!* by Chiquita Mullins Lee and Carmella Van Vleet

Next Book to Watch For: *Not Everyone is Going to Like You* by Rinny Perkins April 25

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Can We Please Give the Police Department to the Grandmothers?* by Junauda Petrus

- » Seeking: Picture book manuscript, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade
- » To submit: PBS submissions up to two weeks after conference



Hannah Moushabeck

she/her/hers | www.hannahmoushabeck.com | [@hannahmoushabeck](https://www.instagram.com/@hannahmoushabeck) | [@hannahmoushabeck](https://www.facebook.com/@hannahmoushabeck) | [@hmoushabeck](https://www.twitter.com/@hmoushabeck)

Hannah Moushabeck is a second-generation Palestinian American author, editor, and marketer who was raised in a family of booksellers and publishers in Western Massachusetts and England. Born in Brooklyn into Interlink Publishing, a family-run independent publishing house, she learned the power of literature at a young age. *Homeland: My Father Dreams of Palestine* is her first picture book. She lives in Amherst, Massachusetts on the homelands of the Pocumtuc and Nipmuc Nations.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Homeland: My Father Dreams of Palestine* (Chronicle Books, March 23)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Girls Rock Indonesia* By Claudia Bellante (Interlink Publishing)



Marilyn Nelson

she/her/hers | marilyn-nelson.com

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



Patricia Park

she/her/hers | patriciapark.com | [@patriciapark718](#)

Patricia Park, the award-winning author of *RE JANE* (a retelling of *Jane Eyre*), makes her young adult debut in *Imposter Syndrome & Other Confessions Of Alejandra Kim*, a funny and poignant novel about a multicultural teen from Queens navigating college apps, performative wokeness, identity politics, and grief. Patricia is a professor of creative writing at American University and has written for *The New Yorker*, *New York Times*, *Guardian*, and others. A Queens native, she lives in Brooklyn.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Imposter Syndrome & Other Confessions of Alejandra Kim* (Feb 21, 2023)

Next Book to Watch For: *What's Eating Jackie Oh?* (2024)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Frankly in Love* by David Yoon



Linda Sue Park Founder & Curator, Allida Books/HarperCollins

she/her/hers | lindasuepark.com | [@LindaSuePark](#)

Linda Sue Park is the founder and curator of Allida Books, a HarperCollins imprint, which seeks to publish books centering the passions and strengths of creators from marginalized communities. She is the author of more than thirty books for young readers, including the Newbery Medal title *A Single Shard* and the *NYTimes* bestseller *A Long Walk to Water*. Park serves on the board of advisors for We Need Diverse Books and the Rabbit Hole children's literature museum project, as well as maintaining the kiBooks.com website for Korean diaspora creators.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *You Are Here: Connecting Flights*

Next Book to Watch For: *Smiling Eyes*, written by Linda Sue Park, illustrated by Lenny Wen

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Freewater*, by Amina Luqman-Dawson

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

» To submit: Send to AllidaBooks@harpercollins.com

Identify yourself upfront as an Kweli attendee

Submit cover letter + manuscript

Window for submissions opens 1 week after the last day of the conference and closes six months later

Have patience. Thank you!



Brianna Peppins

she/her/hers | briannapeppins.com | [@Lexi_pep](#) | [@Lexi_pepp](#)

Brianna Peppins is the author of young adult contemporary books, including *Briarcliff Prep* and *As Long as We're Together*. She was raised in PG County, Maryland and graduated from Spelman College with a B.A. in Psychology. When not writing, Brianna takes special interest in spending time with her loved ones, social justice issues and is a self-proclaimed movie aficionado.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Briarcliff Prep* (November 15, 2022).

Next Book to Watch For: *As Long as We're Together* (May 16, 2023)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Seton Girls* by Charlene Thomas



Jas Perry / J.P. Takahashi Literary Agent, KT Literary

she/her/hers | jas-perry.com | jptakahashi.com | [@TakahashiPerry](#)

Jas Perry is an Agent with KT Literary representing Middle Grade and Young Adult fiction and Graphic Novels for all ages, with a focus on creators of color from communities traditionally excluded from the publishing industry. She's the Director of Special Projects at POC in Publishing, is a member of the Association of American Literary Agents, and has served as a judge for We Need Diverse Books' Walter Dean Meyers Grants. Jas writes as J.P. Takahashi, and her debut picture book *Tokyo Night Parade* with Minako Tomigahara is upcoming with HarperCollins/Tegen in October 2023, with another to follow in Spring 2025.

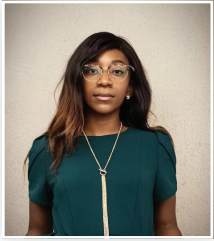
Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *As Long As We're Together* by Brianna Peppins (Scholastic)

Next Book to Watch For: *Tokyo Night Parade* (HarperCollins/Tegen, 10/10/2023)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Night of the Living Queers*, edited by Shelly Page and Alex Brown (Macmillan/Wednesday, 08/29/2023)

» Seeking: Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Realistic contemporary, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Historical, Graphic novels, Illustration portfolios

» To submit: QueryManager.com/jas/Kweli23



Bria Ragin Editor, *Joy Revolution*, Random House Children's Books

she/her/hers | [@BriARag](#)

Bria Ragin is an Editor at Delacorte Press, where she can edit MG and YA fiction. She also edits novels for Joy Revolution, an imprint of Random House Children's Books that was co-founded by critically acclaimed authors Nicola and David Yoon, which focuses on teen romances written by and about people of color. Her authors include *New York Times* bestselling author Talia Hibbert, USA Today bestselling author Amalie Howard, and a list of brilliant debuts like Sher Lee, author of the upcoming *Fake Dates and Mooncakes*. Prior to joining the Delacorte team in 2021, she worked at HarperCollins. She's always looking to uplift marginalized voices.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Queen Bee* by Amalie Howard publishes 4/4/2023.

Next Book to Watch For: *House Party* edited by Justin A. Reynolds (OSD: 6/27/2023)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: There are so many great authors--Jesse Sutanto, Angeline Boulley, Jade Adia, Xiran Jay Zhao, Krystal Marquis



Quessa Robinson Literary Agent, Folio Literary Management/Folio Jr.

she/her/hers | [publishersmarketplace.com/members/QuessaRobinson](#) | [@qnrisawesome](#) | [@quessa](#)

Quessa Robinson joined Folio Literary Management in 2022 after working at previous agencies, including the Nelson Literary Agency, and as an editor for five years. She is originally from San Francisco, but has been living in New York City for over a decade. As a New York based agent, she is eager to build her MG, YA, and Adult lists. Quessa was also a member of the 2017-2019 WNDB Walter Grant Committee and holds an MFA in Creative Writing: Fiction from Columbia University. In 2020, she was named a *Publisher's Weekly* Star Watch finalist.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Serwa Boateng's Guide To Vampire Hunting; The Love Match*

Next Book to Watch For: *And Other Mistakes; Their Viscious Games*

- » Seeking: Middle-grade, Young adult, Realistic contemporary, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Romance
- » To submit: [QueryManager.com/QueryQuessa/KWELI2023](#)



Andrea L. Rogers

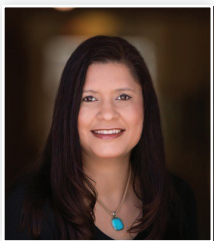
she/her/hers | [AndreaLRogers.com](#) | [@andrealogers](#)

Andrea L. Rogers is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation. She grew up in Tulsa, Oklahoma, but currently attends The University of Arkansas in Fayetteville where she is a doctoral student in English. Andrea graduated with an MFA from the Institute for American Indian Arts. Andrea has three wonderful daughters. She taught Art and HS English in public schools for 14 years. Her work for young people includes, essays, picture books, and middle grade stories.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Man Made Monsters* (Levine Querido)

Next Book to Watch For: *When We Gather* from Heartdrum in 2024.

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *She is a Haunting* by Trang Thanh Tran



Kim Rogers

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

Kim Rogers is the author of *Just Like Grandma*, illustrated by Julie Flett; *A Letter for Bob*, illustrated by Jonathan Nelson, is planned for summer 2023; and *I Am Osage: How Clarence Tinker became the First Native American Major General*, illustrated by Bobby Von Martin comes out in winter of 2024, all with Heartdrum. Kim is an enrolled member of Wichita and Affiliated Tribes and a member of the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. She lives with her family on her tribe's ancestral homelands in Oklahoma.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Just Like Grandma*

Next Book to Watch For: *A Letter for Bob* (September, 2023)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Braiding Sweetgrass for Young Adults* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, Adapted by Monique Gray Smith, Illustrations by Nicole Neidhardt



Aida Salazar

she/her/hers | [www.AidaSalazar.com](#) | [@aida_writes](#) | [@aidawrites](#)

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

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Jovita Wore Pants: The Story of a Mexican Freedom Fighter* (3/7/23) and anthology *Calling the Moon: 16 Period Stories by BIPOC Authors* (3/27/23)

Next Book to Watch For: *When Moon Blooms* (Board book, Fall 2023, Penguin) & *Ultraviolet* (Verse novel, Spring 2024, Scholastic)



Sheetal Sheth

she/her/hers | www.sheetalsheth.com | [@beneaththesheetz](#) | [@sheetalsheth](#)

Sheetal Sheth is an award-winning actress, producer, author, and activist. She is known for her trailblazing performances in a wide range of film and TV roles and for being a fierce advocate of traditionally marginalized communities. She is one of the founders of the nonprofit For the Love of Reading and is an ambassador for the global literacy nonprofit Room to Read. She served in AmeriCorps and is currently on the board of SAYA and the advisory board of Equality Now. Sheth began her career at a time when few South Asians were making their living as actors. Despite being told she'd have to change her name to work, her successful career has trail-blazed paths for other women of color across media. Sheetal is the author of *Making Happy* and created the *Anjali* series, the first picture book series featuring an Indian American hero. Visit her at sheetalsheth.com.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Making Happy*

Next Book to Watch For: *Always Anjali* - new edition April 25

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Lissette Norman*



Lisa Stringfellow

she/her/hers | lisastringfellow.com | [@EngageReaders](#)

Lisa Stringfellow writes middle grade fiction and has a not-so-secret fondness for fantasy with a dark twist. Her debut fantasy *A Comb Of Wishes* was selected as an ABA Indie Introduce Kids and Indie Next Kids title, a 2022 Horn Book and Today Read With Jenna Jr. summer reading selection, and a 2022 New England Book Award finalist. Her work often reflects her West Indian and Black southern heritage. Lisa is a middle school teacher and lives in Boston, Massachusetts, with her children and two bossy cats.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *A Comb of Wishes*

Next Book to Watch For: *Kingdom of Dust* (Summer 2024)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *A Taste of Magic* by J. Elle



Nadine Takvorian

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

Nadine Takvorian is a first-generation Armenian-American author/illustrator of children's books and graphic novels. From within the Armenian diaspora, Nadine's family is *Bolsahye* — from Istanbul, Turkey.

She is passionate about exploring identity and history and battling cultural erasure. She also nourishes a soft spot for fantasy and alternate worlds. Nadine lives with her husband and two children in Berkeley, CA, where they dig holes in their garden and dream of diving into waves at sea.

Nadine is currently writing and illustrating her debut YA graphic novel *Armaveni* with Levine Querido, Spring 2025.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): not applicable

Next Book to Watch For: *Armaveni* (Spring, 2025)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Everything Sad is Untrue*, Daniel Nayeri



J.E. Thomas

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

J.E. Thomas spent her early summers stuffing grocery bags with books at the local library, reading feverishly, then repeating the process week after week, so it's not surprising that she thinks books + imagination are the best streaming service around. A Colorado native, she has bachelor degrees in Mass Communications and Political Science, and a master's degree in Public Communications. *Control Freaks*, published by Levine Querido, is her first book. She's now beginning work on her debut YA novel. Fun fact: She includes the name of at least one of her dogs in every book.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Control Freaks*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Perfectly Parvin* by Olivia Abtahi



Traci N. Todd

she/her/hers

Traci N. Todd is an award-winning children's book author and the editor of many successful books, including the *New York Times* bestselling *The ABCs of Black History*. She is especially interested in amplifying the experiences of Black and brown folks and in inspiring inquisitiveness, compassion, and hope in all children. She believes the truth is powerful. And she loves a beautiful picture book.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Holding Her Own: The Exceptional Life of Jackie Ormes*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Winsome Bingham



Irene Vázquez Assistant Editor and Publicist, *Levine Querido*
she/they/theirs | irenevazquez.com | [@irene.rene.ren](https://www.instagram.com/irene.rene.ren) | [@capaciousmood](https://twitter.com/capaciousmood)

Irene Vázquez is a Black Mexican American poet, journalist, and editor, originally from Houston, Texas. Irene's debut chapbook *Take Me To the Water* was released by Bloof Books in October 2022. Irene is a Best of the Net and Pushcart Prize nominated writer, whose work can be found in *Muzzle*, the *Oxford American*, and the *Brooklyn Rail*, among others.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The Making Of Yolanda La Bruja* by Lorraine Avila

Next Book to Watch For: *The Free People's Village* by Sim Kern (August 2023)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Morgan Parker (*Who Put This Song On*)

- » Seeking: Picture book manuscript, Middle-grade, Young adult, Realistic contemporary, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Romance
- » To submit: Please send your submission to irene@levinequerido.com with "Kweli 2023" in the subject line



Gwendolyn Maya Wallace
she/her/hers | [@g.m.wallace](https://www.instagram.com/g.m.wallace) | [@gwendolynw__](https://twitter.com/gwendolynw__)

Gwendolyn Wallace is the author of the forthcoming picture books *The Light She Feels Inside* illustrated by Olivia Duchess (Sourcebooks, Fall 2023), *Joy Takes Root* illustrated by Ashleigh Corrin (Kokila, Summer 2023) and also *Dancing With Water* illustrated by Tonya Engel (Kokila). Gwendolyn is a 2021 Yale graduate and is now a fellow at the International African American Museum in Charleston as well as a graduate student at University College London studying for her masters in public history. She is interested in histories of race and gender, cultures of protest, and environmental violence. Gwendolyn is also on the board of the REACH (Reproductive Equity, Access, & Choice) Fund, Connecticut's first abortion fund! Gwendolyn can usually be found crafting, exploring used bookstores, or finding any way to follow the radical impulses of young children.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Joy Takes Root* (June 2023)

Next Book to Watch For: *The Light She Feels Inside* and *Dancing With Water*

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Some Of Us Did Not Die* (an essay collection by June Jordan!)



Imani Lee Williams
she/they | findimani.com | [@findimani](https://www.instagram.com/findimani)

Classically trained, Imani Williams has played roles such as Queen Anne in Ken Ludwig's, *The Three Musketeers*, *Philaminte in Learned Ladies*, and Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible*. This May, she will receive her Master's degree from the Florida State University Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training. Imani serves as a teaching artist at several Boys & Girls Club locations and for the EasterSeals' Kaleidoscope program. She is a fan of Andrea Beaty's Aaron Slatore, Illustrator, which comes in handy for her work as a featured storyteller in Sarasota Art Museum's Activating Words series. Imani recently completed a school tour where she played Athena in the Asolo Rep Education Department's devised work, *Looking for Ithaca: An Odyssey*. She is excited to lend her voice to the opening paragraphs of Kweli Color of Children's Literature's faculty and attendees' work and is eager for voiceover narration to be her next venture.



Jacqueline Woodson
she/her/hers

Jacqueline Woodson is the recipient of a 2020 MacArthur Fellowship, the 2020 Hans Christian Andersen Award, the 2018 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, and the 2018 Children's Literature Legacy Award, and she was the 2018–2019 National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. Her *New York Times* bestselling memoir, *Brown Girl Dreaming*, won the National Book Award, as well as the Coretta Scott King Award, a Newbery Honor, and the NAACP Image Award. She also wrote the adult books *Red at the Bone*, a *New York Times* bestseller, and *Another Brooklyn*, a 2016 National Book Award finalist. Her dozens of books for young readers include Coretta Scott King Award and NAACP Image Award winner *Before the Ever After*, *New York Times* bestsellers *The Year We Learned to Fly*, *The Day You Begin*, and *Harbor Me*, Newbery Honor winners *Feathers*, *Show Way*, and *After Tupac and D Foster*, and the picture book *Each Kindness*, which won the Jane Addams Children's Book Award.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *The World Belonged To Us*



Phoebe Yeh

VP/Co-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. Recent novels include *Operation Sisterhood* (Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich), *Eb & Flow* (Kelly J. Baptist) for tweens, *Imposter Syndrome And Other Confessions Of Alejandra Kim* by Patricia Park and *Chaos Theory*, a novel about mental health, substance abuse and love by Nic Stone for teens. What do Soman Chainani (*School For Good And Evil*), Lincoln Peirce (*Big Nate*) and Nic Stone (*Clean Getaway*) have in common? They are all debut middle grade novels she edited and she's currently looking for middle grade novels and graphic novels for her list. Yeh is a recipient of the inaugural CBC Diversity Outstanding Achievement Award.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Imposter Syndrome And Other Confessions Of Alejandra Kim* by Patricia Park

Next Book to Watch For: *My Father The Panda Killer* by Jamie Jo Hoang (Aug 29, 2023)

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Minh Le

- » Seeking: Picture book manuscript, Picture book dummies, Middle-grade, Young adult, Realistic contemporary, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Mystery, Graphic novels
- » To submit: Attendees should be KWELI 2023 in subject head and submit to me at my PRH email address.



Victoria Ying

she/her/hers | victoriaying.com | [@victoriaying](https://twitter.com/victoriaying)

Victoria Ying is a critically acclaimed author and artist living in Los Angeles. She started her career in the arts by falling in love with comic books, this eventually turned into a career working in animation and graphic novels. She loves Japanese Curry, putting things in her shopping cart online and taking them out again and hanging out with her husband and furry friends. Her film credits include *Tangled*, *Wreck it Ralph*, *Frozen*, *Paperman*, *Big Hero 6*, and *Moana*. She is the author and illustrator of her own series *City of Secrets* and *City of Illusion* through Penguin/Viking and the illustrator of the DC series *Diana Princess of the Amazons*. Her upcoming graphic novel projects her YA debut, *Hungry Ghost* and the Marvel/Scholastic *Shang-Chi and the Secret of Immortality*.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Diana and Nubia Princesses of the Amazon*

Next Book to Watch For: *Hungry Ghost*, April 25, 2023

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Himiwari House*



Brian Young

he/him/his | brianlyoung.com | [f /BYoungWrites](https://facebook.com/BYoungWrites) | [@byoungwrites](https://twitter.com/byoungwrites)

My name is Brian Young. I am Red-Running-Into-Red Clan and born for the Tangle People Clan. My maternal grandfather's clan is Bitter Water. My paternal grandfather's clan is Bitter Water. I am enrolled with the Navajo Nation and grew up in Fort Defiance, Arizona. I currently live in Brooklyn, New York.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Healer of the Water Monster*, Heartdrum

Next Book to Watch For: *Heroes of the Water Monster*, May 23, 2023

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: Andrea Rogers, *Man Made Monsters*



Ibi Zoboi

she/her/hers | ibizoboi.net | [@ibizoboi](https://twitter.com/ibizoboi)

Ibi Zoboi is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *American Street*, a National Book Award finalist; *Pride; My Life as an Ice Cream Sandwich*; *Star Child*; *Okoye to the People*; the Walter Award-winning *Punching the Air*, cowritten with Exonerated Five member Yusef Salaam; and the Coretta Scott King Honor-winning picture book *The People Remember*. She is also the editor of the anthology *Black Enough*. Born in Haiti and raised in New York City, she now lives in New Jersey with her family. You can find her online at ibizoboi.net.

Most Recent Book (Published/Agented/Edited): *Star Child: A Biographical Constellation of Octavia Estelle Butler*

Next Book to Watch For: *Nigeria Jones* - May 3, 2023

Diverse Book/Author to Recommend: *Me (Moth)* by Amber McBride

PERFORMERS



Shayna Dulberger

she/her/hers

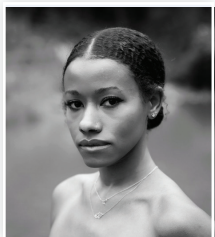
Bassist Shayna Dulberger has been an active performer in New York City since 2001. She has played in many ensembles including those led by William Parker, Ras Moshe, Jessica Pavone and Elliot Sharp. Dulberger draws inspiration from jazz, noise, punk, western and eastern classical music. In every performance she pushes herself into the unknown whether through composed or improvised. Dulberger (b. 1983) is from Mahopac, NY. She attended Manhattan School of Music Preparatory Division in High School and was awarded a Bachelor of Music from Mason Gross School of The Arts Conservatory, Rutgers University of New Jersey where she majored in Jazz Performance. "Shayna Dulberger is an integral part of that generation who has made the commitment to unlocking further mysteries inside the tone world." William Parker



Djassi DaCosta Johnson

she/her/hers

Djassi DaCosta Johnson is a native New Yorker, dancer, choreographer, filmmaker, photographer, writer, designer, Doula, Womb Healer and Activist. Ms. DaCosta Johnson received her BA in Anthropology and English from Barnard College while a fellowship student at Alvin Ailey. She has apprenticed, performed and toured with Dance Brazil, Earl Mosley, Bill T. Jones, Hernando Cortez, Urban Bush Women, and was a soloist with MOMIX for a decade. After living abroad in Brazil and then Italy for seven years working on Film and Television, Ms. DaCosta Johnson received her M.F.A. in Dance & New Media/ Technology from NYU Tisch in 2018 as a Dean's Fellow. Her choreography, photography and films have been displayed at Museums, Galleries and exhibitions internationally including Photoville (Brooklyn), National Museum of Women in The Arts, Brooklyn Museum, Shed Halle (Zurich), and throughout Italy. Ms. DaCosta Johnson's work is rooted in access to the arts with dance as the engine—through bringing dance outside of the elite-concert walls in order to enliven people and spaces in collaboration with all aspects of art and towards elevation of the collective human spirit as a reminder of the magical physical and energetic vessels that we all are.



Makeda-Lily Love-Roney

she/her/they

Makeda-Lily Love-Roney (she/her/they) is a fourth generation artist from unseated Lenape Nation land known as New York. She's a life, body, & energy alchemist, creative, dance artist, model and Body Alignment/Pilates coach. Makeda has worked/performed with BalletNext, Nimbus Dance Works and nia love | Blacksmith's Daughter, Urban Bush Women, Liz Lerman, Debbie Allen and others. She's currently a freelance dance artist, nia love's teaching/choreographic assistant and movement collaborator of 10 years and the Producer & Co-Host of *New York Times'* featured Black Dance Stories. Makeda has been featured in *The New Yorker*, *Cake and Whiskey Magazine*, *A Ballerina's Body Book*, *KT-LA Debbie Allen's Hot Chocolate Nutcracker Excerpt*, *Ritual: Short Film*, and more.



Jafet Reinoso

he/him/his

Jafet Reinoso, born in Santo Domingo, was part of the first promotion of male ballet dancers graduating from the National Dance School of the Dominican Republic, where he studied for over 10 years under the direction of Ivan Monreal Alonzo, the grandson of Alicia Alonzo. He participated in the The Champaign Urbana Ballet summer intensive in 2015 performing *Don Quijote* in the national theater of Cuba, and was invited the following year to perform in North Carolina dance festivals in performances of *The Fiddler on the Roof* and *Flame of Paris*. Jafet joined the Dominican National Ballet at the age of 18 years old where he worked as corps de ballet and performed as a soloist. At the age of 20 years old he left his country to join Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre performing alongside the company studio in classical ballets such as *Giselle*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*. Jafet entered the classroom in 2020 teaching classical ballet at a variety of studios across the nation. Moving to New York in 2022, Jafet performed alongside American Liberty Ballet and independent choreographers. Connecticut Ballet then welcomed Jafet to the company as a soloist. Jafet continues to dedicate his life to dance and the free expression of the arts, while being an active advocate for diversity in the world of classical ballet.

**“I WRITE TO SHARE
THE WORLD I SEE
AND HOPE
FOR—ONE WHERE
EVERY CHILD CAN
EXPERIENCE AND
WITNESS
POSSIBILITIES.”**

—Leah Henderson,
faculty member and
proud Spalding
MFA alum ('11)



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