

BOSTON BOOK FESTIVAL

OCTOBER 17 2026

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Presented in partnership with



Copley Sq.

Saturday, Oct 17





Boston Public Library Plaza, Dartmouth Street, and Copley Square Park



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| 18. Boston Review | 39 & 40. Food Truck | 57. School on Wheels of Massachusetts |
| 19. WBUR | 41. Che Empanada | 58. Spinning Wheel Stories & Picnic Heist |
| 20. Lesley Univeristy | 42. Formaggio Kitchen | 59. Happy Camper |
| 21. UMass Boston MFA in Creative Writing and MA in English | 43. Roe House | 60. The MIT Press |
| 22. Cambridge Public Library | 44. Readercon | 61. Face Painting |
| 23. The Boston Globe | 45. Boston International Antiquarian Book Fair | 62. Pop Up Poets, Boston |
| 24. Page Street Publishing | 46. GBH | 63. Mass Poetry |
| 25. Lyric Stage | 47. New Bedford Whaling Museum | 64. GrubStreet |
| 26. Broadway In Boston | 48. Brattle Book Shop | 65. Ploughshares & AGNI |
| 27. ArtsBoston | 49. Sisters in Crime New England | 66. TBR Writing & Publishing Conference / Pngyrus |
| 28. The Huntington | 50. Mystery Writers of America New England | 67. The Writers' Room of Boston |
| 29. ArtsEmerson | 51. New England Science Fiction Association Inc | 68. Solstice Magazine |
| 30. Prison Book Program | 52. Maine Authors Publishing | 69. BBF Literary Lounge & Serve and Stir |
| 31. Chapter One / LibraryThing | 53. The Association of Rhode Island Authors | 70. Reading Is Fundamental, Brainstorm Tent |
| 32. Storykeeper Studio | 54. Author Solutions/ AuthorHouse Kids | 71. JWStickerShop |
| 33. Book Around | 55. Wondermore | |
| 34. The Nor'Easter | 56. 826 Boston | |
| 35. The Common | | |
| 36. The Dolphin Studio | | |
| 37. BBF, Info Booth | | |
| 38. Homebase Coffee | | |

A WARM WELCOME TO THE 18TH ANNUAL BOSTON BOOK FESTIVAL

It's fall in Boston and our beloved festival has arrived with the season. As we come together as a new Board Chair and new Executive Director, we have had hundreds of meetings with our broad and diverse literary communities, our partners in the City of Boston, and beyond. What we continue to hear over and over is the joy this festival brings. That joy is vital to our mission to gather the Greater Boston community together with authors, to celebrate our shared love of reading, the transcendent power of stories, and a meaningful exchange of ideas through a wide-range of programming that is free and open to all.

We believe that books make us more thoughtful, compassionate humans, and more engaged citizens. When we come together to listen and engage with bold new voices, unique stories, and brilliant creative minds, we strengthen our communities and we deepen our collective understanding of a shared world. What could be more essential right now?

We are New England's largest literary event, and this is our 18th year. While our Festival day is our core event, we have plans to continue to create unique experiences around books, authors, reading, and ideas in the coming year ahead. We are so happy you have joined us today! We hope that you experience the bright, singular spirit that continues to inspire our work, and we hope you will join us in our commitment to keep our festival free. In all we do, we seek to strengthen the vibrancy of Boston as a beacon of ideas and independent thought, and to spark a lifelong love of reading in future generations.

Please don't forget to scan below and share your thoughts with us.

Thank you for being a part of the Boston Book Festival.

Wishing you a wonderful festival day of celebration, connection, and joy.

Carlin Carr
Executive Director

Dawn Tripp
Board Chair



PS, Let us know about your experience at the
Boston Book Festival by taking our survey online,
bostonbookfest.org/survey2026



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Boston Book Festival Team

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bostonbookfest.org





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Opening Night Night Kickoff | Old South Church

B BOSTON
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OPENING NIGHT

**Michael
Lewis**
NYT
Best-Seller



**Geraldine
Brooks**
Pulitzer Prize
Winner

Friday, October 16
7:30 pm - 9:00 pm
Old South Church
Tickets: \$45 + \$4.95 Fees

**TICKETS INCLUDE A
COPY OF *BLOCKERS***

SPONSORED BY
Morgan Stanley

BBF Opening Night Featuring NYT Bestselling Author Michael Lewis

The Boston Book Festival is pleased to present #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Michael Lewis, in-conversation with Pulitzer Prize winner Geraldine Brooks, author of *Memorial Days*, discussing Lewis's highly anticipated *Blockers: Rebels in the Deep State*.

A masterful storyteller with the remarkable ability to make any subject—from subprime mortgages (*The Big Short*) to baseball statistics (*Moneyball*) to bond sales (*Liar's Poker*)—riveting, Michael Lewis's *Blockers* offers an inside look at the early days of Trump's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and asks the pressing question: "What happens to a country when its public servants are targeted?"

"Michael Lewis has this incredible ability to zoom in on one person's story, and from there reveals something much bigger about our culture. His books leave you seeing the world differently." (Katie Couric)

Lewis views the "meteor strike" of the second Trump administration through the eyes of public servants attacked by DOGE—including one who kept Americans' most sensitive tax data out of the wrong hands; another who made sure that politicians played by the rules; one who figured out how to stop wildfires from destroying suburban neighborhoods; and another who helped uncover the mysteries of cystic fibrosis. Each believed they had a calling and were doing essential work for the country. They were then told they were a "blocker:" an impediment, a holdover, someone useless who needed to go.

Boston Book Festival's Opening Night is sponsored by Morgan Stanley.

Friday, October 16

7:30pm

Old South Church | ■

Michael Lewis photo credit: Tabita Soren
Geraldine Brooks photo credit: Randi Baird

GET TICKETS

<https://bostonbookfest.org/an-evening-with-michael-lewis/>





Nonfiction Sessions Saturday, Oct 17

NONFICTION



The Wondrous World of Birds

Lorna Gibson, Tina Morris, with Mark Faherty

In 1975, as an ornithology student, **Tina Morris** was selected to help reintroduce bald eagles into New York State after

their population was decimated by DDT. For two years, she cared for seven eaglets at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge—a remarkable story of determination she recounts in *Return to the Sky: The Surprising Story of How One Woman and Seven Eaglets Helped Restore the Bald Eagle*. In *Birds Up Close: An Engineer Explores Their Hidden Wonders*, renowned engineer and lifelong birder **Lorna Gibson** explores the astonishing science and beauty of bird feathers, bones, bills, eggs, flight, and more. *The Weekly Bird Report* host **Mark Faherty** will moderate a conversation sure to captivate seasoned birders and curious newcomers alike, with full-color photographs projected throughout the session.

10:30 am - 11:30 am

Old South Church - Mary Norton Hall | ■



Monsters in the Archives: My Year of Fear with Stephen King

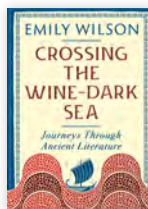
Caroline Bicks, with Edgar B. Herwick III

Start your day inside the private archives of “the indisputable King of Horror” (*Time*)

with **Caroline Bicks**, the University of Maine’s inaugural Stephen E. King Chair in Literature. The first scholar granted extended access to the archives and in-depth interviews with King about his creative process, Bicks’s *Monsters in the Archives: My Year of Fear with Stephen King* is a “master class in craft” (Stephen Graham Jones), a “compulsively readable mix of memoir, biography, and heady analysis” (Paul Tremblay), and a “must-read for anyone curious about how great books get written” (James Shapiro). **Edgar B. Herwick III**, host of GBH’s *Curiosity Desk* and co-host of *The Culture Show*, guides this conversation about the enduring hold King’s stories have on readers.

10:30 am - 11:15 am

Trinity Church - Undercroft | ■



Classics Keynote: Translation Across Time

Daniel Hahn, Emily Wilson

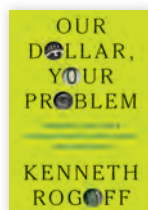
Internationally acclaimed translator and classicist **Emily Wilson**, celebrated for her renditions of Homer’s *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, presents a spirited

meditation on translating the ancient past in her “enthraling and profoundly relevant” (Salman Rushdie) new book *Crossing the Wine-Dark Sea: Journeys Through Ancient Literature*. Wilson will be in-conversation with award-winning translator, writer, and editor **Daniel Hahn**, whose effervescent *If This Be Magic: The Unlikely Art of Shakespeare in Translation* illuminates how writers and actors bring Shakespeare to audiences across the world. From the obscenities of Aristophanes to the conundrum of puns, Helen of Troy’s politics to Hamlet’s soliloquies, Wilson and Hahn explore the complex questions that translators face—and the impact of their choices. Join us for a fascinating exchange about the power of translation across centuries and cultures.

This session is generously supported by Timothy Diggins and Deborah Coleman Diggins and sponsored by Samsonite.

11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Old South Church - Main Sanctuary | ■



Chess and Money

Ben Mezrich, Kenneth Rogoff

In this unlikely pairing, **Ben Mezrich** will discuss his latest, *Checkmate: Genius, Lies, Ambition and the Biggest Scandal in Chess*—an “epic,

swirling melodrama of hubris, money, and tech” (*Publishers Weekly*)—with lauded economist **Kenneth Rogoff**, author of *Our Dollar, Your Problem: An Insider’s View of Seven Turbulent Decades of Global Finance, and the Road Ahead*, a “well-written, often surprisingly lively book” (*Financial Times*). They have in common that, at bottom, most stories are all about the money. But, there’s more: Kenneth Rogoff is an international chess grandmaster. Come hear these two renowned authors discuss chess and money in what is sure to be an entertaining session.

11:00 am - 12:00 pm

First Church - Sanctuary | ■



Sickness and Public Health

Michelle A. Williams, Muhammad H. Zaman, Manoush Zomorodi, with Ian Coss

Breakthroughs in our understanding of disease

have enduring impacts, but many challenges remain. **Michelle A. Williams**, a true innovator in global health, tells how radicals and renegades have improved conditions for millions in *The Cure for Everything: The Epic Struggle for Public Health and a Radical Vision for Human Thriving*. **Muhammad H. Zaman**, who studies infectious disease dynamics, explains how such diseases have been weaponized by governments against the vulnerable and powerless in *Infected: How Power, Politics, and Privilege Use Science Against the World’s Most Vulnerable*. TED Radio Hour host **Manoush Zomorodi** argues that our online lives carry tremendous physiological costs and offers lively advice to make changes in *Body Electric: The Hidden Health Costs of the Digital Age and New Science to Reclaim Your Well-Being*. **Ian Coss**, host and creator of the Peabody Award-winning podcast “The Big Dig,” moderates this important conversation about our collective health.

This session is sponsored by Boston University Center on Forced Displacement.

11:45 am - 12:45 pm

Trinity Church - Undercroft | ■



From Desire to Dessert: What Feeds Us

Tanya Bush, Joanne Chang, Tarajia Morrell

This session is full of sweet and savory stories from books you’ll want to devour—and return to

often. In *The Joy of Cookies: New Classics and Old Favorites to Share*, James Beard Award-winning baker and Flour founder **Joanne Chang** recounts the first cookie she made with her mom (Nestlé Toll House chocolate chip) and her enduring delight in the magic of baking. In *Desire Feeds the Feast*, James Beard Award-winning writer **Tarajia Morrell** captures a life fueled by the pleasures of food as she explores what it means to hunger for beauty, love, and belonging. And in *Will This Make You Happy: Stories & Recipes from a Year of Baking*, pastry chef and *Cake Zine* co-founder **Tanya Bush** offers a coming-of-age love story about discovering an appetite for play and indulgence—and the deep satisfaction of dedicating yourself to something new.

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Old South Church - Mary Norton Hall | ■



HELP THE BBF LIVE
HAPPILY EVER AFTER
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NONFICTION



Living and Thriving, Together

Kate Brown, Demond Martin, Samantha Paige Rosen, with Larry Gennari

This session is a joyful examination of how we can make our personal

and communal lives better through collaborative, connected living. In the anthology *Living, Together: Reimagining Community in the Age of Disconnection*, editor **Samantha Paige Rosen** brings together essays about the innovative ways people across the country are redefining home and community. In *Tiny Gardens Everywhere: The Past, Present and Future of the Self-Provisioning City*, environmental historian **Kate Brown** presents a “riveting social history of the world, as seen through gardens” (*Kirkus*, starred). And in *Friends of the Good: How Remarkable Friendships Transform Our Lives*, WellWithAll co-founder **Demond Martin** shares how guiding lights, mentorship, and kinship shaped his life and how the quality of our friendships determines who we become. Presented in partnership with the Authors and Innovators Business Ideas Festival, this inspiring discussion will be moderated by **Larry Gennari**, founder and curator of Authors & Innovators.

This session is sponsored by Authors & Innovators.

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Boston Public Library – Rabb Hall | ■



The Radical Duke and the American Revolution

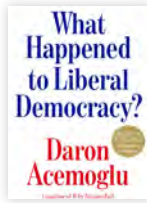
Danielle Allen, with David Leonard

“A landmark book about the people and ideas that changed the world” (Jon Meachem),

Danielle Allen’s *Radical Duke: How One Aristocrat—and the American Revolution—Transformed Britain*, “has the potential to significantly rewrite the history of the American Revolution’s intellectual origins” (*Wall Street Journal*). At the center of Allen’s work is the gallivanting Third Duke of Richmond, Charles Lennox, rarely mentioned and unheralded as a key figure in the Age of Revolution, whose covert alliance with Thomas Paine helped stoke the fires of rebellion across Britain and the Atlantic. Join Boston Public Library’s President **David Leonard** as he explores how unearthing a parchment of the Declaration of Independence buried away in Sussex led Allen—political philosopher, distinguished professor at Harvard, and expert in democracy renovations—to discover a story of immense historical importance.

12:15 pm - 1:15 pm

Boston Public Library – Guastavino | ■



The Future of Liberal Democracy

Daron Acemoglu, Michelle Berenfeld, Quinn Slobodian with Susan Goldberg

From ancient Rome to the present day, this session examines political

systems as they were envisioned—and undone. Nobel laureate **Daron Acemoglu** dissects the implosion of liberal democracy and argues for a new path forward in his “timely and thought-provoking” (*FT*) *What Happened to Liberal Democracy?: Remaking a Politics of Shared Prosperity*. **Michelle Berenfeld** directs our attention to the Roman Republic’s collapse after five centuries of representative government in *Lessons from a Lost Republic: What Ancient Rome Can Teach Us About This American Moment*. And **Quinn Slobodian** and Ben Tarnoff’s eye-opening *Muskism: A Guide for the Perplexed* reveals how Elon Musk is fundamentally reshaping global politics and economic systems to fit his worldview. **Susan Goldberg**, President and CEO of GBH, will guide this vital conversation.

12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

Old South Church – Main Sanctuary | ■



Encounters with Art

Megan O’Grady, with Sebastian Smee

What does art do and what is its value? In her poignant and personal meditation, *How It Feels to Be Alive: Encounters with Art and Ourselves*,

critic and essayist **Megan O’Grady** dissects her own encounters with art and artists to understand how art can affect and change us—how it allows us “to apprehend the world anew.” “In an era when the arts feel increasingly imperiled,” Cathy Park Hong states, *How It Feels to Be Alive* “shines as a rapt testament to art’s ongoing vitality.” Join O’Grady and Pulitzer Prize-winning art critic **Sebastian Smee** for a clarifying conversation about art’s role in our private lives and communal world.

1:15 pm - 2:00 pm

Trinity Church – Undercroft | ■



Memoir: Home and Away

Zaina Arafat, Michael Lowenthal, with Tina Cassidy

Two award-winning fiction writers trace displacement and

connection, identity and legacy in their evocative new essay collections. In *Our Arab: On Longing, Belonging, and Hope*, Lambda Literary Award-winning novelist **Zaina Arafat** considers the emotional landscape of living in the

diaspora as a Palestinian. With essays that move from Nablus to the Appalachian Mountains, Amman to Manhattan, Arafat offers a “beautiful and thoroughly honest meditation on home as both journey and destination” (Omar El Akkad). In *Place Envy: Essays in Search of Orientation*, **Michael Lowenthal** chronicles his travels as a queer, agnostic Jewish man—including visiting his grandmother’s German hometown, a love affair in Brazil, living with Amish family in Pennsylvania, playing jazz with Afrofuturist Sun Ra—all the while asking what world, what place, can hold us all and all that we contain” (Lyz Lenz). **Tina Cassidy**, Chief Marketing Officer of GBH, will guide this meaningful conversation.

1:15 pm - 2:15 pm

Public Library – Commonwealth Salon | ■



Acts of Recovery: Crossing Genres of Lineage and Loss

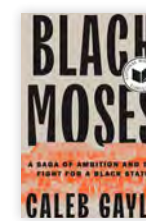
Tisa Bryant, Eleni Sikelianos

Two works that excavate ancestral and artistic lineages provide a rich

foundation for a session with these singular writers. In *Residual*, **Tisa Bryant** considers what becomes an archive in the wake of her mother’s death. Drawing from the legacies of Black women artists, including Lorraine Hansberry and Octavia E. Butler, and interweaving her own memories with what remains of her mother’s everyday life, Bryant’s richly imagined memoir is “an inventory and an altar” (Lara Mimosa Montes). *Memory Rehearsal*, **Eleni Sikelianos**’s third book in a trilogy that grapples with complicated family histories, presents “a moving family memoir and a triumph of cultural archaeology” (*Kirkus*, starred) that explores unexpected, vibrant intersections between queer history, ancient theater, utopian visions, and modern poetry. Join us to explore what stories we inherit and those we learn to tell.

1:45 pm - 2:45 pm

Old South Church – Guild Room | ■



Amazing True Stories from American History

Caleb Gayle, Denise Kiernan, with Debra Adams Simmons

Longlisted for the National Book Award, **Caleb Gayle**’s *Black Moses: A Saga of Ambition and the Fight for a Black State* tells the

extraordinary story of Edward McCabe, a Black man who fought to establish a Black state and chose Oklahoma as his promised land. “A hidden history that Americans need to know” (Ilyon Woo), this brilliantly told story continues to resonate. Joining him is bestselling author **Denise Kiernan**, who turns her attention to the unsung women at the heart of the American Revolution in



Obstinate Daughters: The Rebels, Writers, and Renegade Women Who Ignited the American Revolution. From the battlefields to the printing press, plantations to the pulpit, Kiernan's absorbing portraits embody how women helped shape the nation. **Debra Adams Simmons**, GBH Editor-in-Chief of Special Projects, guides this important conversation about remarkable lives in American history and what they mean to us today.

1:45 pm - 2:45 pm

Boston Public Library – Guastavino | ■



The Road to Authoritarianism: Are We There Yet?

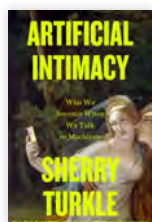
Omer Aziz, Casey Michel, Timothy W. Ryback, with Jennifer Moore

Three authors offer compelling accounts of democratic erosion. In *53*

Days: How Hitler Dismantled a Democracy, historian **Timothy W. Ryback** shows how Hitler used constitutional means to purge the civil service, shut down the press, suspend civil liberties, impose draconian tariffs, and ultimately compel the Reichstag to grant him dictatorial powers. **Omer Aziz's** *Shadows of the Republic: The Rebirth of Fascism in America and How to Defeat It* for Good investigates why young people like him are drawn to the ultranationalist right, exposing fascism's deep roots in America alongside ideas for reinvigorating democracy. And in *United States of Oligarchy: How America's Wealthiest Ally with Dictators, Weaken the U.S., and Destroy Democracy*, journalist **Casey Michel** chronicles how a small group of staggeringly wealthy people have stealthily been amassing far-reaching power. Join GBH News Senior Features Editor **Jennifer Moore** as we ask: is it too late?

2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Old South Church – Main Sanctuary | ■



Being Human

Eric C. So, Sherry Turkle, with Moira Weigel

Two exceptional thinkers address the urgent issue of what it means to be human in an age of AI. From **Sherry Turkle**—our foremost chronicler

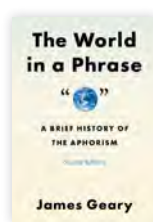
of digital culture and human psychology—comes an instant touchstone: *Artificial Intimacy: Who We Become When We Talk to Machines*. Lauded by Jonathan Haidt, Esther Perel, Vivek Murthy, and more, Turkle's book examines how our growing dependence on artificial intimacy erodes our ability to connect and care deeply for each other. Joining her will be **Eric C. So**, whose “clear-eyed, nuanced, and highly accessible” (*PW*, starred) new

book, *The Collision: What AI Does to Us*, offers an indispensable guide to using AI as a tool—not as a replacement for human intelligence, empathy, and creativity. Guiding this vital conversation will be **Moira Weigel**, whose research centers on the history and social life of communication technology.

This session is sponsored by the Lyric Stage Boston.

2:00-3:00 pm

First Church – Sanctuary | ■



Aphorisms, Lost Greek Plays, A Russian Phrasebook: How Language Shapes Our World

James Geary, Maria Kuznetsova and Dan Storyev, James Romm, with Martin Puchner

Three fascinating books look at how language helps us make sense of our lives. In *The World in a Phrase: A Brief History of the Aphorism*, public policy lecturer (and juggler) **James Geary** highlights the wise and witty world of aphorisms from ancient China and to modern-day meme-makers. In *Since You're Mortal...: Life Lessons from the Lost Greek Plays*, acclaimed classicist **James Romm** translates—for the first time in verse English—surviving pieces of timeless wisdom from the lost plays of ancient Athens (“Hades, alone of the gods, does not enjoy bribes”). In *How to Survive Authoritarianism: A Russian's Phrasebook for Everyday Life in America*, **Maria Kuznetsova** and **Dan Storyev** offer an indispensable lexicon for facing authoritarianism, written by two exiled dissidents from a country with centuries of experience. **Martin Puchner**, prize-winning author of books including *Culture: The Story of Us*, will be our guide through this lively conversation.

2:45 pm - 3:45 pm

Boston Public Library – Commonwealth Salon | ■



The Second Half of Life

Tom French, Margie Lachman, Ellen Warner, with Callie Crossley

Join *Under the Radar* GBH host **Callie Crossley** as she debunks myths about midlife. In *Primetime: A New Vision for Midlife*,

leading lifespan researcher **Margie Lachman** recasts midlife as a perfect time for personal growth, drawing on her landmark 30-year study to offer strategies for cultivating a fulfilling life. For *The Other Half: Forty Men Reveal Life After Fifty*, photojournalist **Ellen Warner** interviewed men across the world—from a film director

and philosopher to a taxi driver, chess grandmaster, and hairstylist. She shares their thoughtful reflections alongside her striking portraits. After retiring from a decades-long career in business, **Tom French** returned to the passions of his youth to discover what meaning they held now. In *The Gap Years: Climbing, Skiing, and the Journey Back*, he depicts his adventures—including summiting Mount Everest!—and shows how transformative journeys are possible at any age.

3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Old South Church – Mary Norton Hall | ■



Seeds of Power: What Data Reveals About Our Lives

Eric Gordon, Annie Lowery, Roopika Risam, with Lisa Pierpont

Paperwork and data: for these authors, those words inspire a richly

animated conversation. **Annie Lowery**, staff writer at *The Atlantic*, exposes the cost of America's endless paperwork in *The Time Tax: How Government Wastes Our Time—and How to Fix It*. An eye-opening look at American bureaucracy, Lowery shares clear steps to reclaim your time. In *How Institutions Listen: Civic Data, AI, and the Path to Public Trust*, **Eric Gordon**, Director of Boston University's Center for Media Innovation & Social Impact, proposes “listening at scale,” using human-centered AI to make sense of the mountains of civic data and translate it into action. And in *Data Empire: The Power of Information to Organize, Control, and Dominate*, **Roopika Risam**, a leader in the field of digital humanities, argues that data—from clay tablets to the algorithmic state—has been as essential as ships and guns to human history. Emmy Award-winning multi-media journalist, **Lisa Pierpont** hosts this crucial conversation.

3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Boston Public Library – Exhibition Hall | ■



Architecture Keynote: Architecture and Memory

Michael P. Murphy, with Maryann Thompson

Architect, educator, and “tomorrow's greatest designer” (*The Atlantic*), **Michael P.**

Murphy illuminates how the spaces we inhabit impact our individual and collective lives in *Our World in Ten Buildings: How Architecture Defines Who We Are and How We Live*. Taking us through signature projects in his career—including the Butaro Hospital with Dr. Paul Farmer and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice with Bryan Stevenson—Murphy explores

NONFICTION

his journey toward an innovative design process that is fundamentally collaborative and bears in mind how the built environment reflects and determines how we think, feel, and connect with each other. Architect **Maryann Thompson**, whose design practice is also interdisciplinary in nature, will guide this revelatory conversation.

This session is generously supported by Ann Gund in memory of Graham Gund.

3:00-4:00 pm

Boston Public Library – Rabb Hall | ■



How To Be a Citizen

Roger Berkowitz, Howard Bryant, Eric Liu with Saraya Wintersmith

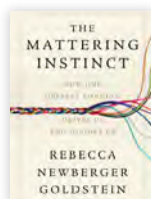
Join GBH News Politics Reporter and host of the “What is Owed?” podcast **Saraya Wintersmith** to explore the promise

and peril of public action. In *Kings and Pawns*: Jackie Robinson and Paul Robeson in America, **Howard Bryant** brings to life the ongoing Black American conflict between patriotism and protest through two pivotal appearances before the House Un-American Activities Committee: Robinson’s 1949 testimony and Robeson’s 1956 defiance. In *A World We Share: Hannah Arendt and the Power of Friendship in a Broken World*, **Roger Berkowitz** considers how Arendt’s wide-ranging relationships shaped her political thinking, arguing that democracy depends on cultivating connections across differences. And in *Live Like a Citizen: 8 Ways to Change Your Mindset and Our Country*, **Eric Liu** champions the transformative power of democratic life, offering eight practices for everyday actions that expand our capacity to turn toward one another rather than against each other. c life in extraordinary times.

This session is sponsored by the Lyric Stage Boston’s production of Arthur Miller’s All My Sons, which runs until October 25.

3:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Old South Church – Main Sanctuary | ■



Mattering and Belonging

Ian Marcus Corbin, Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, with Kieran Setiya

Two philosophers tackle the most fundamental aspects of human existence: the need for

belonging, the desire to matter, and our connection to others. In *The Mattering Instinct: How Our Deepest Longing Drives Us and Divides Us*, award-winning author **Rebecca Newberger Goldstein** posits that the “mattering instinct” underlies our need to undertake projects large and small that

make us feel worthy of attention. The need to matter motivates great achievements, but, Goldstein cautions, it can also lead to great evil. **Ian Marcus Corbin**, director of Harvard’s Public Culture Project, believes that our society fosters a state of competition, anxiety, and acquisitiveness along with a fetishization of strength that leads to a deep sense of paranoia and loneliness. In *To Arrive Where We Started: Belonging in the Modern World*, Corbin calls for a return to the lost habits of gratitude, humility and friendship. MIT philosophy professor **Kieran Setiya**, author of *Life Is Hard: How Philosophy Can Help Us Find Our Way*, hosts this conversation.

3:30 pm - 4:30 pm

First Church – Sanctuary | ■



Call it Evil: Understanding the Trump Era

Susan Neiman, with Sabine von Mering

Moral philosopher **Susan Neiman** makes the argument for naming and

confronting evil as essential to preserving democracy in an age of demagogues. *Call It Evil* is a bold reckoning with one of the most fraught words in our moral vocabulary. Philosopher Susan Neiman argues that “evil” is not a relic of the past or a term to be avoided, but a vital lens through which to understand the threats facing democracy today. From the rise of Donald Trump to the erosion of shared values, Neiman examines how our reluctance to name evil has left public life vulnerable to demagogues who twist morality to their own ends. Drawing on history—from fascism to the moral failures of recent US leaders—she shows how the normalization of wrongdoing corrodes trust, distorts justice, and endangers our future. This is a book for readers who refuse to accept moral confusion as the price of political life, and who believe that confronting evil is the first step toward renewal.

This session is sponsored by the Goethe-Institut.

3:30 pm - 4:30 pm

Goethe-Institut Boston | ■



The Landscape of American History

Beverly Gage, Megan Kate Nelson, with Jeremy Siegel

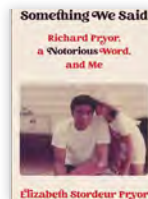
In *This Land Is Your Land: A Road Trip Through U.S. History*, Pulitzer Prize-winning author **Beverly Gage** (*G-Man*) takes us on a road trip

across the country—through museums and roadside attractions, reenactments and souvenir shops—highlighting 13

key sites and historical moments that show the complexity of America’s past and the possibility of our future. In *The Westerners: Mythmaking and Belonging on the American Frontier*, Pulitzer Prize finalist **Megan Kate Nelson** presents “a richly layered portrait of the 19th-century frontier” (*PW*, starred) that depicts the captivating lives of people moving through the American West—Indigenous peoples, Black Americans, Mexican Americans, and Canadian and Asian immigrants—and the subsequent attempts by many Americans to replace that history with a national myth of the frontier. Join **Jeremy Siegel**, who takes listeners on a road trip across Massachusetts in his weekly GBH news show *In Common*, to dive into past and present narratives about America.

4:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Boston Public Library – Rabb Hall | ■



Personal and Public: The Complex Legacies of Race in America

Justin Ellis, Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor, Dorothy Roberts, with Dr. Noelle N. Trent

Weaving together family history, archival research,

and present-day reporting, these authors offer profound meditations on private and societal reckonings. In *Something We Said: Richard Pryor, a Notorious Word, and Me*, historian **Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor** probes the American lexicon’s most charged word and her complicated relationship with her father, who wielded it in his comedy. In *The Cruelty of Nice Folks: Why Minneapolis Is the Story of America*, journalist **Justin Ellis** grapples with a hometown that trumpets its progressive image while papering over persistent discrimination. And in *The Mixed Marriage Project: A Memoir of Love, Race, and Family*, MacArthur Fellow **Dorothy Roberts** recounts growing up in segregated 1960s Chicago with a white father and Black Jamaican mother, then discovering decades later that her father’s research on interracial marriage began long before her parents’ love story. **Dr. Noelle N. Trent**, President and CEO of the Museum of African American History, will moderate.

This session is sponsored by the Museum of African American History Boston and the James M. and Cathleen D. Stone Foundation.

4:45 pm - 5:45 pm

Old South Church – Guild Room | ■



Who Wants to Be a Billionaire?

Pepper Culpepper, Taeku Lee, Ray D. Madoff, with Tracy Palandjian

Everyone knows the U.S. tax code is unfair, but what you will learn today from **Ray D. Madoff** will shock you. In *The Second Estate: How the Tax Code Made an American Aristocracy*, Madoff lays bare the secret mechanisms that ultra-rich Americans leverage—completely legally—to pay no taxes at all. In *Billionaire Backlash: The Age of Corporate Scandal and How it Could Save Democracy*, **Taeku Lee** and **Pepper Culpepper** show how public anger at corporate excess can be catalyzed into political change if the backlash is strong enough and the public is well informed enough to demand action. Referencing recent scandals, Lee and Culpepper ask: are we ready for change? This essential conversation will be led by **Tracy Palandjian**, CEO and co-founder of Social Finance, a national nonprofit and registered investment adviser whose innovative funding models improve systems and expand opportunity.

5:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Church of the Covenant Sanctuary | ■

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10th Annual

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THE BOOK EVENT FOR BUSINESS MINDS

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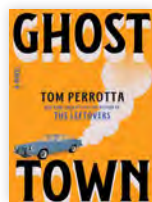
Curated by Gennari Aronson LLP | Business Lawyers. Thought Partners.

More information

bostonbookfest.org



Fiction Sessions Saturday, Oct 17



Hauntings: How Do We Care For Each Other?

Christopher Castellani, Tom Perrotta, April Reynolds, with Kate Tuttle

Who are the ghosts we carry? What losses permeate our communities? Three novels explore the many ways grief haunts us. "A morally complex and life-affirming exploration" (Celeste Ng), **Christopher Castellani's** *Last Seen* follows boys who disappear, then turn up in icy rivers far from home. As their families mourn, the boys begin to find each other in the afterlife and tell their own stories. In **Tom Perrotta's** "wise, funny, bittersweet" (Jayne Anne Phillips) *Ghost Town*, a middle-aged writer looks back on a tumultuous summer in 1970s suburban New Jersey and the personal grief that envelops him as a tense public drama unfolds. **April Reynolds** offers "a song of furor and tenderness" (Walter Mosley) in *The Shape of Dreams*, as three women bond in East Harlem while their neighborhood seeks justice for the murder of a 12-year-old Black boy. Join *Boston Globe* books editor **Kate Tuttle** for this searching conversation. *This session is sponsored by the Boston Globe.*

10:30 am - 11:30 am

Boston Public Library – Exhibition Hall | ■



The Stories We Hide: Desire, Deception, and Dangerous Truths

Andre Hardy, Stephen P. Kiernan, Deborah Goodrich Royce, Katherine A. Sherbrooke, with Sara DiVello

What happens when desire, ambition, and long-held secrets collide? These novelists masterfully map the propulsive power of envy, the shattering cost of success, and the heady risks of creative desire. In *Best Boy*, actress-turned-author **Deborah Goodrich Royce** explores the knife-edge of memory and identity when a shocking letter threatens the carefully constructed life of a woman desperate to outrun her past. Former NFL player **Andre Hardy** wrestles with ethics and family loyalty in *Tear the City Down*, a hard-hitting crime novel that brilliantly blends jazz, football, and a gritty portrait of a city divided. Award-winning writer **Stephen P. Kiernan's** multigenerational portrait of female ambition set against the art and legacy of Jackson Pollock shines in *Pollock's Last Lover*. And acclaimed author **Katherine A. Sherbrooke** explores a mother's impossible dilemma when a wrenching secret collides with her daughter's future in *This Much is True*. Join us for a lively and thought-provoking conversation moderated by author and interviewer **Sara DiVello**.

10:30 am - 11:45 am

Boston Public Library – Guastavino | ■



Fool Me Once: Second Chance Romances

Lea Vale, Brittanée Nicole, Heather Eng, with Callie Crossley

This trio of second chance romances is one panel you do not want to miss.

Brittanée Nicole, author of the *Boston Bolts Hockey* series, brings us a new book boyfriend in *Bonfire & Bliss Bookstore*. The titular bookstore's owner, Penny Darling, has given up on love until struggling author (and her childhood best friend) Jake "Monty" Montgomery returns home seeking inspiration. Soon fiction and reality begin to blur in this sweet and spicy fall novel.

Lea Vale writes of a relationship forming after tragedy in *Blue Sky Black*, where exes Zelda and Ari reunite on the darkest day in modern American history. Finally, **Heather Eng's** protagonist learns to choose herself in *Double Happiness*. Mei Li reconnects with her brother-in-law Alexandre, who seems entirely different from the person he was years ago. All the while, she's engaged to Joey, a man who keeps her grounded while she works 80-hour weeks at her tech start-up. All of these women protagonists have one last chance at true love—see if they find it at this panel moderated by *The Culture Show* host **Callie Crossley**.

10:45 am - 11:45 am

Old South Church – Guild Room | ■



Book Club Reads: The Complications of Love

From an intergalactic TV show to near-future Northern Canada, the luminous beaches of southern France to a

moldy flat in London, three captivating authors explore desire and belonging, choice and survival, the connections we make and the people we leave behind. *What's Mine and Yours* (Read with Jenna) author **Naima Coster** traces the lives of two women who meet as students abroad in *Take What You Can* (GMA Book Club), exploring through their layered friendship what it means to stay in someone's life. **Emma Brodie's**, **Naima Coster**, **Emily Everett**, **Michelle Min Sterling**, with **Leslie Zemeckis** *Into the Blue* (Reese's Book Club) begins with a chance meeting between two wildly different people, whose lives continue to diverge and converge as they question what it costs to forge your own story. **Michelle Min Sterling's** riveting *Camp Zero* (Read with Jenna) follows the fates of a young woman, a professor, and a mysterious collective as they discover what survival requires in a warming world. **Emily Everett's** *All That Life Can Afford* (Reese's Book Club) finds a young woman raised on food stamps hired as a tutor in the glittering world of Saint-Tropez, wrestling with whether a new life requires erasing your

old one. This session will be moderated by award-winning documentary filmmaker, bestselling author, and actor **Leslie Zemeckis**.

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Church of the Covenant Sanctuary | ■



Who Gets to Tell the Story?

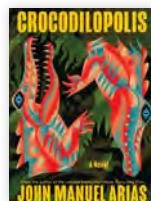
Brinda Charry, Natalie Lemle, Bo Wang, with Dawn Tripp

Novels with roots in real histories raise compelling questions about art, agency, and

ownership. **Brinda Charry's** *Hocus Pocus* follows Samuel, a character based on real-life Indian stage magicians, as he arrives in 1816 Boston and meets a man with a nearly bankrupt museum. When Samuel becomes the museum's first live exhibit, their relationship shifts into unsettling fascination and increasing dependence. **Bo Wang's** "glittering and alive" (*LitHub*) *The Chinese Lady* animates the first Chinese woman brought to the U.S. Combining archival research with dazzling storytelling, Wang reimagines a woman known by many names, with little record of her own thoughts. And in **Natalie Lemle's** *Artifacts*—"a rare novel that tells the truth about art theft" (*Art in America*)—an attorney must reconstruct a summer archaeology dig, as everyone she met is now in danger. Diving into museums and organized crime, Lemle explores the fraught terrain of historical preservation. This session will be hosted by award-winning author **Dawn Tripp**, with a special introduction by 826 Boston writer and poet **Timothy Robinson**.

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Boston Public Library – Exhibition Hall | ■



A Family Saga: Crocodilopolis

John Manuel Arias, with Fanta Diallo

This conversation between literary publicist and *Forbes* 30 Under 30 Honoree **Fanta Diallo**

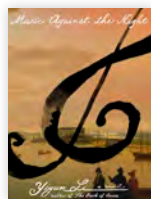
and bestselling author **John Manuel Arias** asks us to explore family loyalty, the pursuit of power, and the justice behind revenge. *Crocodilopolis* follows exiled politician Seth Oreamundo as he first blames, then plots to kill, his brother Orsario for revealing the secret that ruined both of their lives and left Costa Rica changed forever. Come to this conversation for a story, and leave with what Ocean Vuong called "a ferocious meditation on masculinity, legacy, and national myth through an audacious, unforgettable book."

12:15 pm - 1:15 pm

Old South Church – Guild Room | ■



FICTION



Bodies of Work: A Conversation with Yiyun Li and Ed Park

Yiyun Li, Ed Park, with Brigid Hughes

Ed Park—Pulitzer Prize finalist for *Same Bed Different Dreams*, a “merry

prankster who sees straight to the core of our humanity” (*Boston Globe*)—wrote *Three Tenses: A Transmission from the Nineties* in 1998, and saved it on a floppy disk. Now the book—a mosaic of sly observations, enchanting anecdotes, and autobiographical white lies—has been reborn. MacArthur Fellow and Pulitzer Prize winner **Yiyun Li**’s virtuosic new novel, *Music Against the Night*, follows two Romantic-era musicians, oceans apart, whose ambition and desire propel them on journeys across the world, forcing them to decide what each is willing to sacrifice to pursue their art. As Ann Patchett says, “*Music Against the Night* may well be the most perfectly constructed, moving, and beautiful novel I’ve ever read.” Join **Brigid Hughes**, founding editor of *A Public Space* and APS Together, for a spirited conversation with two exceptional authors whose work is animated by the power of storytelling and the sustenance of reading.

This session is sponsored by the Emerson College Graduate School of Admissions.

12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

First Church – Sanctuary | ■



How Love Survives

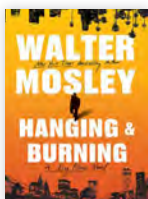
Terah Shelton Harris, Rylan Hynes, Jessica Brilliant Keener, Kerri Maher, with Christine Mastrangelo

The complexity of love unites four resonant novels. In **Terah Shelton Harris**’s *Where the*

Wildflowers Grow, a woman haunted by loss finds an unexpected sanctuary—and a found family—at a flower farm in rural Alabama. Yet her past threatens everything she’s come to love. An apple orchard in Maine sets the stage for **Rylan Hynes**’s luminous debut about queer love and rural identity. The novel follows a young man who returns after a decade away and must reckon with the love he left behind—and the community that forced them apart. **Kerri Maher**’s *Summer of Love* takes us to 1967 San Francisco, where two sisters make life-changing decisions with decades-long consequences. In **Jessica Brilliant Keener**’s *Evening Begins the Day*, two families in crisis shatter the pretense of perfect lives. Together, they find their way from isolation to transformative hope. The host for this session is BBF board member **Christine Mastrangelo**.

12:30 pm - 1:45 pm

First Church – Auditorium | ■



Mystery & Thriller Keynote: Tess Gerritsen and Walter Mosley

Tess Gerritsen, Walter Mosley, with Sara DiVello

ThrillerMaster **Tess Gerritsen** began writing while on maternity leave

from her work as a physician. Since then, her books—including her *Rizzoli & Isles* series—have sold more than 40 million copies. Her new Martini Club series “showcases her talents more than ever” (Lee Child) and features former spies trying to enjoy their quiet coastal retirement. In *The Shadow Friends*, the ex-spies are assailed by the long reach of the Cold War. MWA Grand Master **Walter Mosley**—recipient of lifetime achievement awards from the National Book Foundation, PEN America, and the *LA Times* Festival of Books—will discuss *Hanging & Burning*, featuring Joe King Oliver, the kind of man you call to solve delicate and dangerous problems. In this case, a plea from a dying gangster to find a missing woman. **Sara DiVello**, host of *Mystery and Thriller* Mavens and author of the forthcoming Jazz Age thriller, *The Ace of Spades*, will moderate this propulsive conversation.

This session is sponsored by the Lyric Stage Boston’s production of *The Mirror Crack’d*, which runs from Feb 5 - Feb 28, 2027

1:30 pm - 2:30 pm

Church of the Covenant Sanctuary | ■



Spirited Connections

Janet Rich Edwards, Julie Carrick Dalton, Libbie Grant, with Rachel Barenbaum

Three authors explore faith, belonging, and sacrifice in novels set in 13th-century Bruges, present-day Concord, and

a road trip to Santa Clara. “Atmospheric and unforgettable” (*People*), **Janet Rich Edwards**’s *Canticle* follows Aleys, a 16-year-old who flees an arranged marriage and finds shelter among a community of fiercely independent religious women. In **Julie Carrick Dalton**’s “beautifully wrought tale” (Karen Winn) *The Forest Becomes Her*, an intergenerational group of women fight to save the last oak tree in a centuries-old forest razed for new development. And in **Libbie Grant**’s *The Ended World*—“dazzling work of imagination” (Bruce Holsinger)—a sentient AI connects an ex-nun, an atheist programmer, and a medieval saint on a fateful road trip. Together, these revelatory novels ask what is holy and what is human, and how we might understand one another across great divides. This conversation will be hosted by **Rachel Barenbaum**, the critically acclaimed author of *A Bend in the Stars* and *Atomic Anna* and the host of

NHPR’s Check This Out.

1:30 pm - 2:30 pm

Old South Church – Mary Norton Hall | ■



Obsessive Love and Mythic Subversion

Bar Fridman-Tell, Kyle McCarthy, with Stephen P. Kiernan

Once upon a time, three authors spun intoxicating stories of desire and destruction that drew

on folklore and Gothic traditions. In **Bar Fridman-Tell**’s *Honeysuckle*, a sister makes her little brother a playmate: a girl woven from flowers and words who rots and must be repaired every season. As the years pass, she begins to question the line between care and control. In **Kyle McCarthy**’s *Immersion*, a celebrated dancer abruptly quits and enters an enclosed convent. Convinced the dancer’s ex-husband is responsible, her younger sister—also a dancer—confronts him, only to become unmoored by desire and secrets. Join us as these writers discuss remixing myths and inverting classics to create something resonant and wholly new. This session will be moderated by critically acclaimed author **Stephen P. Kiernan**, whose most recent novel is *Pollock’s Last Lover*.

1:30 pm - 2:30 pm

Boston Public Library – Exhibition Hall | ■

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FICTION



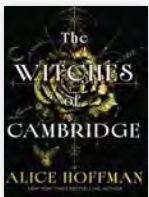
Neighbors: How Do We Live With Each Other?

Heather Abel, Bindu Bansinath, Brian Schaefer, Vincent Yu, with Christine Mastrangelo

These four writers are in community for this panel, which happens to be about how we build community with one another. In *The Emilys*, **Heather Abel** writes about a community in Western Massachusetts faced with a contagious disease that spreads amongst the town's women that prevents them from going outside during the day, and the unlikely neighbors determined to find answers. **Vincent Yu** also writes about crisis in Massachusetts in his book *Seek Immediate Shelter*, but in the case of a ballistic missile threat that turns out to be a false alarm. First comes relief, then comes the reckoning, as each person is forced to face the unforeseen aftermath of decisions they thought might be their last. *Town & Country* by **Brian Schaefer** explores a town divided both by newcomers and its lifelong residents, but also by politics when local pub owner, Chip Riley, runs against wealthy young carpetbagger, Paul Banks, for a swing seat. Finally, **Bindu Bansinath** writes of women coming together to solve a murder in their community in her book *Men Like Ours*. Whether bridging tensions or driving them further, these books explore what it means to live alongside other people. Hosted by BBF board member **Christine Mastrangelo**.

2:15 pm - 3:30 pm

First Church - Auditorium | ■



Magical Women: Witches, Writers, and the Lives We Imagine

Alice Hoffman, Laura Zigman, with Dawn Tripp
From the magic of **Alice Hoffman's** *Witches of Cambridge*, an

instant *New York Times* bestseller and September's Read with Jenna pick, to the wickedly entertaining world of **Laura Zigman's** brilliant satire, *The Author Weekend*, these two beloved authors explore women, ambition, creativity, and the tales we tell, on and off the page. Come for the stories, stay for the magic—and the surprises. This conversation will be moderated by award-winning author **Dawn Tripp**.

3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Church of the Covenant Sanctuary | ■



Lies of Admission

Randy Boyagoda, Afsheen Farhadi, with Jodi-Ann Burey

Two deliciously subversive novels take aim at America's academic and

entertainment industries. In **Randy Boyagoda's** epic campus novel, *Lords of Serendipity*, a Sri Lankan village girl and a middle-class American girl are each intent on attending an elite university—with fathers doing anything they can to make it possible. Keenly observed, wry, and generous, Boyagoda considers where hope meets hypocrisy in higher education. From Harvard to Hollywood, **Afsheen Farhadi's** gripping debut, *False Prophet*, follows Jal, an actor grieving his mother's death. A misunderstanding with his manager prompts Jal to write a memoir of his mother's teenage years in Guyana and her encounter with cult leader Jim Jones. The book going viral would be perfect for Jal's career—if only it didn't happen to all be lies. Join **Jodi-Ann Burey**, author of *Authentic: The Myth of Bringing Your Full Self to Work*, for a conversation on who gets to belong, and at what cost.

3:15 pm - 4:15 pm

Old South Church - Guild Room | ■



Adventures Across Multiple Dimensions

John Chu, Aleese Lin, with Kathleen Carr Foster

Let these wildly imaginative adventures transport you to new worlds—with problems

just like our own. In **Aleese Lin's** *Samantha Spük: Paranormal Wedding Planner*, "Sabby" Spük has escaped her family's legacy of supernatural chaos for a nice, normal 9-5—until her grandmother's will drags her back to Salem. Will meeting a mysterious hottie in the graveyard make her rethink where she belongs? Nebula- and Hugo Award-winning author **John Chu's** *The Subtle Art of Folding Space* finds Ellie's universe falling apart: her mom is in a coma, her sister accuses her of being insufficiently Chinese, and a shadowy cabal is hijacking the machinery running every universe. If she can overcome her family's generational trauma, Ellie just might find a way to make everything right—but will the secrets she uncovers force her to choose between her family and the universe itself? Join **Kathleen Carr Foster**, author of forthcoming debut *The Jewel of Corlivo*, for a conversation across dimensions.

4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

First Church - Auditorium | ■



Split Selves, Dystopian Futures

Anton Hur, Isabel J. Kim, Tomás Q. Morín, with Michelle Min Sterling

Three authors speculate on what our world will become—and who we

will become in response. In **Isabel J. Kim's** *Sublimation*, immigration physically splits a person into two "instances." Soyoung Rose Kang had no intention of remaining tied to her alternate self; when her "instance" calls Rose home to Korea for her grandfather's funeral, she has no idea that Soyoung intends to steal her body and her life. In *Toward Eternity*, **Anton Hur** writes of a robotic cancer cure that causes immortality as a side effect, exploring questions around the meaning of personhood and what we really have to fear from technology. *Cat Love* by **Tomás Q. Morín** envisions the world through the lens of a cat, taken from their beloved owner to train "Emotional Support Humans" in this dystopian future. Moderated by *New York Times* bestselling author of *Camp Zero* **Michelle Min Sterling**, this panel looks to the future to consider how we treat the world and one another.

4:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Old South Church - Mary Norton Hall | ■



Transformative Connections

Across Generations
Allison King, Elizabeth Lim, Tom Lin, with Kerri Maher

Travel the globe and through the ages with

these panelists, spanning generations of immigrant narratives with their books.

Tom Lin's *Babylon, South Dakota* follows a family after they move from China to a rural homestead in the US, where both the choices they make and the wondrous chance encounters at the farm have a lasting impact on their descendants.

Allison King writes of recluse Monica Tsai, determined to reunite her grandmother with her long-lost cousin, in *The Phoenix Pencil Company*. All the while, Monica is clueless to her grandmother's and cousin's powers, as well as the secrets the pair formed as spies during World War II. **Elizabeth Lim** adult debut *Fishbone Cinderella* follows Ha Yut Ying as she escapes Japanese-occupied Hong Kong through her magical ability to disappear, as well as Marigold, her daughter who wants nothing more than to see the stories her mother left behind. These stories weave together magic, lineage, and immigrant stories. Surely one for the generations, this conversation will be moderated by bestselling author **Kerri Maher**.

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

First Church Sanctuary | ■



Fiction Keynote: Intersections of the Unexpected

Edwidge Danticat, Imbolo Mbue, with Tim Ehrenberg

Tim Ehrenberg ("Tim Talks Books") hosts this special session with two highly acclaimed, generous authors whose new novels raise profound questions about loss and survival, grace and judgment, forgiveness and regret. **Edwidge Danticat's** *Dey*, longlisted for the National Book Award, opens with Magnolia, a successful Haitian American real estate agent in Miami, running for cover when she hears gunfire at a shopping mall. Safely home, she tells no one, but the shock transforms her relationships as she asks "what if" and "what now?" Bestselling author of *Behold the Dreamers*, **Imbolo Mbue's** *Every Story is a Love Story* centers a different kind of trauma: a car accident that kills Wolo's beloved wife. Years later, a letter arrives from the driver of that car; her deep remorse leads him to grapple with what we owe to those who have hurt us, and whether grief and healing can ever be shared.

5:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Old South Church – Main Sanctuary | ■

The Spark Reading Series at BBF 2026

Writing a book is often a years-long process. What is it that keeps writers going? What was the spark that got these powerhouse writers started –and how does that spark light the fire that sustains them through the challenges of a long project? The presenters in this reading series will share the story of their inspiration, and then read a short passage of their work that best captures that initial spark that made them passionate about their projects in the first place.



Spark! High Seas Adventure

Julie Gerstenblatt, Ashton Lattimore, Ethan Rutherford, with Katherine Howe

Set sail with award-winning authors whose absorbing novels conjure consequential moments in maritime history. 1851, Nantucket: A daughter stows away on her parents' merchant voyage as a long-buried secret comes shockingly to light in **Julie Gerstenblatt's** epic tale of adventure, *The Stargazer of Nantucket*. 1878, New Bedford: A whaling ship sets out for the Chukchi Sea in **Ethan Rutherford's** *North Sun, Or, The Voyage of the Whaleship Esther*, a finalist for the National Book Award. 1923, Martha's Vineyard: In the wake of her father's mysterious shipwreck, a young Black

woman takes over his rum-running business to save her seafaring family—and uncover the truth behind his death—in **Ashton Lattimore's** *Runner*. **Katherine Howe**, author of *A True Account: Hannah Masury's Sojourn Amongst the Pirates, Written By Herself*, moderates this conversation about unforgettable fictional journeys inspired by real histories.

11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Boston Public Library – Newsfeed Cafe | ■



Spark! Gothic Horror

Abigail Rose-Marie, Gabrielle Sher, Ashley Woo, with Trisha Blanchet

Gothic horror takes the stage with three riveting novels about dark secrets and consuming grief. In **Abigail Rose-Marie's** *White Rabbit*—"a tour de force of dazzling originality and voice" (Kim Taylor Blakemore)—a girl grapples with her father's abrupt departure and her emotionally absent mother in a house haunted by the ghost of Sylvia Plath. In **Ashley Woo's** *Wildwood*, a surprise inheritance opens the door to hundreds of years of avarice in this "complex, powerful story of land and legacy" (*Flynn Berry*). And in **Gabrielle Sher's** *Odessa*—"a tender and gutting showstopper" (*PW*, starred)—set in a vividly imagined Russia at the height of the pogroms, a

family turns to ancient magic to bring back their murdered daughter, with ominous consequences. Join moderator **Trisha Blanchet**, author of the irresistible *Murder Like Magic* for this conversation about the histories that haunt us.

12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

Boston Public Library – Newsfeed Cafe | ■



Spark! Inspired by Art and Artists

Enthralling novels that imagine the worlds of artists connect this session. In *Love & Other Monsters*, **Emily Franklin** brings to life the summer of 1816, when Claire Clairmont gathers a group of daring young writers—Mary Godwin, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron—and sets into motion a season of human harm and creative fervor, out of which comes *Frankenstein*. **Priya Parmar's** *The Original* transports us to 1930s Hollywood and the singular life of Katharine Hepburn, offering a riveting portrait of a fiercely independent, sexually fluid star who redefined what it meant to be a woman in film. **Lance Olsen's** *An Inventory of Benevolent Butterflies* imagines outsider artist Henry Darger in 1973 Chicago; paired with Andi Olsen's photo collages, Olsen evocatively renders the interior life of a private man about whom little is known. **Whitney Scharer**, author of *The Age of Light* and founder of the writing and publishing conference TBR, moderates.

2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Boston Public Library – Newsfeed Cafe | ■

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY (BPL)							GOETHE-INSTITUT
GUASTAVINO HALL	COMMONWEALTH SALON	ORIENTATION ROOM	EXHIBITION HALL	TEEN CENTRAL	CHILDREN'S LIBRARY	CHILDREN'S REY ROOM	FRENCH LIBRARY FIRST FLOOR
		10:00-11:00 Building a Memoir's Global World for an American Audience Margaret Woo Lorena Hernández Leonard Xujun Eberlein HOST Alexis Chen Johnson	10:30-11:30 Hauntings: How Do We Care For Each Other? Christopher Castellani Tom Perrotta April Reynolds HOST Kate Tuttle		10:30-11:00 Eleanor Davis	10:45-11:45 Monsters, Ghouls, and Never Giving Up Haley Neil Raúl the Third	10:00-11:00 The Rarest Fruit Gaëlle Bélem HOST Barbara Bouqueneau
10:30-11:45 The Stories We Hide: Desire, Deception, and Dangerous Truths Deborah Goodrich Royce, Andre Hardy Stephen P. Kiernan Katherine A. Sherbrooke HOST Sara DiVello	10:15-11:15 Open Book: Novelists Answer Your Writing Questions Steve Almond, Daniel José Older, Yu-Mei Balasingamchow, and Lori Gold HOST Lauren Artilles	11:30-12:30 Go Global: Writing International Issues and Reaching Readers Overseas Amy M. Alvarez Anjali Mitter Duva Kai Maristed HOST Elizabeth Searle	12:00-1:00 Who Gets to Tell the Story? Natalie Lemle Brinda Charry Bo Wang HOST Dawn Tripp	12:15-1:15 Epic Tales from Across the Globe E. Lockhart Rajani LaRocca HOST Katie B. Kohn	11:15-11:45 Gary R. Gray, Jr.		11:00-12:00 Korean Voices in Poetic Form Lee Seong-bok, Anton Hur Shin Hae-uk, Spencer Lee-Lenfield HOST Sandra Lim
12:15-1:15 The Radical Duke and the American Revolution Danielle Allen HOST David Leonard	11:45-12:45 Soilpunk: Growing Radical Futures Annie Chen Zoe Lee Yemi Amu Claire Gustavson HOST Lana Z Porter	1:00-2:00 Sonnet Workshop Jill McDonough	1:30-2:30 Obsessive Love and Mythic Subversion Kyle McCarthy Bar Fridman-Tell HOST Stephen P. Kiernan	1:45-2:45 Fantasy Worlds and Falling in Love Maria Ingrande Mora Jennifer Lee Elizabeth Lim HOST Siân Gaetano	12:00-12:30 Brian Lies	12:15-1:15 Ghost Light: The Last Resort Sara Farizan	11:30-12:30 The Deserters Mathias Énard HOST Benoit Landon
1:45-2:45 Amazing True Stories from American History Caleb Gayle Denise Kiernan HOST Debra Adams Simmons	1:15-2:15 Memoir: Home and Away Michael Lowenthal Zaina Arafat HOST Tina Cassidy				12:45-1:15 Sibu T.P.		12:30-1:30 A Reading with Richard Hoffman and Lloyd Schwartz HOST Danielle Jones
	2:45-4:00 Aphorisms, Lost Greek Plays, A Russian Phrasebook: How Language Shapes Our World James Geary James Romm Maria Kuznetsova Dan Storyev HOST Martin Puchner		3:00-4:00 Seeds of Power: What Data Reveals About Our Lives Roopika Risam Eric Gordon Annie Lowrey HOST Lisa Pierpont	3:15-4:15 Capsized and Head of the Charles Charlotte Lillie Balogh HOST Kate Tuttle	2:15-2:45 Edwidge Danticat	1:45-2:45 Friendships and Finding Your Way Norm Feuti Janae Marks Sofia Warren HOST Lori Lobenstine	1:00-2:00 Before I Forget Anne Pauly HOST Bruno Perreau
						2:30-3:30 A Labor of Love: The Art of Literary Translation Emma Ramadan Sam Taylor HOST Stéphanie Ravillon	2:00-3:00 Celebrating the Mass Book Award Carla Panciera Laura Cresté Patrick Donnelly HOST Courtney Andree
						3:15-4:15 The Library of Memories Barbara Perez Marquez Lissy Marlin HOST Matthew Noe	3:30-4:30 Call it Evil: Understanding the Trump Era Susan Neiman HOST Sabine von Mering

ADDITIONAL EVENTS:

COPLEY SQ. OUTDOORS
BRAINSTORM TENT
10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Join Reading is Fundamental's 60th anniversary celebration:
Free books
Reading activities
Author read-aloud

12:00 • 1:00 • 2:00 • 3:00

Boston By Foot Walking Tours
Meet at BBF Info Tent

COSTUME CHARACTERS
11:30-1200
9:30 am - 1:30 pm

Molly of Denali
Arthur
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

GOETHE-INSTITUT
WORKSHOP SPACE
11:00 am -12:00 pm

Sonnet Making
Open space for sonnet making, Mass Poetry
12:30 pm -1:30 pm
Love To Share Love: Workshop
Emmanuel Oppong-Yeboah

ROOM & BOARD
6:30-7:30

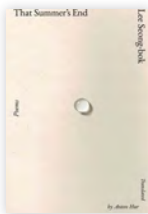
Poems & Pints
Kirun Kapur
Carson Jordan
Clay Ventre
Tomás Q. Morín
HOST Amanda Shea
Doors open at 6:00

SCAN TO VIEW
SCHEDULE ONLINE



Poetry Sessions Saturday, Oct 17

Readings



Korean Voices in Poetic Form

Lee Seong-bok, Anton Hur (translator), Shin Hae-uk, Spencer Lee-Lenfield (translator) with Sandra Lim

Famed South Korean poet **Lee Seong-bok**, a favorite of RM, leader of K-pop superstars BTS, and translator **Anton Hur**, who was double-longlisted for the International Booker Prize in 2022, present the English

translation of *That Summer's End*, 106 poems of self-reflection and exquisite beauty. "Nature, loss, and longing inspire these quiet verses, which conjure a sense of the immense mysteries governing the observable world" (*The New Yorker*). They are joined by acclaimed "poet's poet" **Shin Hae-uk** with her debut English-language *Biologicity*, evocatively translated by **Spencer Lee-Lenfield**. Praised as a prophet of the post-human, written with deadpan wit and lyric innovation, this collection reveals a whole new world of contemporary Korean poetry. Join **Sandra Lim**, author of the forthcoming collection *The Givens*, as she moderates this conversation about philosophy, form, and translating emotions.

11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Goethe-Institut 1st Floor | ■



A Reading with Richard Hoffman and Lloyd Schwartz

Richard Hoffman, Lloyd Schwartz, with Danielle Jones

Join us for this session that spans a lifetime—the lifetime to date of award-winning poet **Richard Hoffman**. With the matched volumes, *Each Child a Disappearance: New & Selected Poems*

(1972–2025) and *Mundus et Infans: New & Selected Suites, Sequences, & Series*, Hoffman explores his celebrated past and present as an artist. Exploring grand concepts with the same honesty as domestic scenes, learn from an author that National Book Award winner Patricia Smith calls "a fiercely gifted poet whose stanzas revel in the infinite possibilities of language." He will be joined by **Lloyd Schwartz**, poet laureate of Somerville—"A major poet with a gentle comic soul" (Roger Rosenblatt)—who will share from his new books, *He Tells His Mother What He's Working On* and *Artur Schnabel and Joseph Szigeti Play Mozart at the Frick Collection (April 4, 1948) and Other Poems*. **Danielle Jones**, director of the Nossrat Yassini Poetry Festival, will host this reading and conversation.

This session is sponsored by Mass Poetry.

12:30 - 1:30 pm

Goethe-Institut | ■



Celebrating the Mass Book Award

Laura Cresté, Patrick Donnelly, Carla Panciera, with Courtney Andree

Three distinctive voices from the 2026 Mass Book Awards longlist come together to read work that moves between the intimate and the expansive, reckoning with painful family legacies and navigating the burdens of memory and the past. Exploring grief, desire,

and the healing power of the natural world, **Laura Cresté** (*In the Good Years*), **Patrick Donnelly** (*Willow Hammer*), and **Carla Panciera** (*One Trail of Longing, Another of String*) make room for contradiction, layering joy and tenderness alongside more difficult truths. They will share poems from their longlisted collections, as well as new work. **Courtney Andree**, Executive Director of Mass Center for the Book, will host.

This session is sponsored by Mass Poetry.

2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Goethe-Institut | ■

Love To Share Love: Workshop

Emmanuel Oppong-Yeboah

This workshop's title is from one of the closing lines of the poem "For you: anthophilous, lover of flowers," written by the poet Reginald Dwayne Betts. It's a strange love poem, addressed to someone in particular, "anthophilous," but exploring love in its broadness, its specificities, and also in its weirdness. This workshop is an invitation to write weird love poems! To explore love in its little oddities, and to mine for the language best suited to describe the things and people we love.

This workshop is sponsored by Mass Poetry.

12:30 pm - 1:30 pm

Goethe-Institut | ■

Open Sonnet Making

We leave this room open just for you to explore the artistry of the sonnet.

With strict rhyme schemes, meter, there's much to do to make poems that you will not forget.

No leader, no lessons, but time to write (decide Petrarchan or Shakespearean).

Not long until inspiration takes flight

for an hour, until you get weary. In

this space, make stories, elegies, or odes—

this free-writing space is waiting for you.

Only you know where your poems will go

and the lessons this poem puts you through.

Come to the Goethe-Institut for this

Sonnet making time you won't want to miss.

This session is sponsored by Mass Poetry.

This sonnet was written by Abbie Langmead, BBF's Communications Manager, who is also a poet. That being said, they prefer free verse.

11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Goethe-Institut 1st Floor | ■



Workshops

The Sonnet: Bang Out a Formal Poem the Size of Your Hand Jill McDonough

Sonnets are short, powerful, and incredibly varied in what they can accomplish. In this workshop we will think of the form as a kind of puzzle, like a game of word-Tetris, a bespoke Sudoku for when you are stuck in a meeting or on a bus. You're just tinkering around, then BAM! you have a workable poem draft that's already paying attention to sound and precision. Students will learn just enough about poetic meter—and have the opportunity to discuss their entirely reasonable fears of poetic meter. You don't have to have written poetry before to be able to take this course: we'll start off writing prose, and then refine it in stages before you write your own sonnet in class, with all the help you want.

This session is sponsored by Mass Poetry.

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Boston Public Library - Orientation Room | ■

Poetry Off the Page

Essmaa Litim, Daiana "Dexter" Garcia, René Manuel Ram, with Amanda Shea

A stellar line-up of spoken word poets take the stage and steal some hearts in a fast-paced, time-stopping poetry extravaganza: **Essmaa Litim, Daiana "Dexter" Garcia, René Manuel Ramos.** Whether you're a longtime fan of spoken word or this is your first experience, this reading is sure to immerse you in poetry and leave you wanting more. Our host is **Amanda Shea**, a three-time Boston Music Award-winning Spoken Word Artist and Executive Producer of FreeVerse Presents.

This session is sponsored by Mass Poetry.

3:30 pm - 4:15 pm

Boston Public Library: Newsfeed Café | ■

Poems & Pints

Amanda Shea

Join us and raise a glass (or two) with other poetry lovers at what's become a favorite BBF tradition, Poems & Pints! Comfy furniture, free pints and pretzels, with readings by notable poets from their new collections.

This session is sponsored by Mass Poetry.

6:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Room & Board | ■



French Library Program Saturday, Oct 17

Gaëlle Bélem on *The Rarest Fruit*

Gaëlle Bélem, with Barbara Bouqueneau

Join **Gaëlle Bélem**, an award-winning author from Réunion Island, in conversation with **Barbara Bouqueneau**, President of the French Library, about Bélem's novel *The Rarest Fruit*. Born into slavery on Réunion Island and orphaned at an early age, Edmond Albius developed an extraordinary talent for botany. His discovery of how to pollinate vanilla orchids transformed the cultivation of one of the world's most beloved flavors. Based on his true story, *The Rarest Fruit* brings a long-overlooked Black innovator to life in a tale of resilience, discovery, and 19th-century adventure. A 2025 *New York Times* Notable Book, it was hailed as "a gorgeous novel." Bélem's debut, *There's a Monster Behind the Door*, was longlisted for the 2025 International Booker Prize. *This session is sponsored by Villa Albertine Boston.*

10:00 am-11:00 am | French Library, 1st Floor | ■

Mathias Énard on *The Deserters*

Mathias Énard, with Benoit Landon

A soldier flees a nameless war, seeking safety alongside a woman and a donkey. In another time, an East German mathematician survives Buchenwald and devotes his life to communism. What connects their stories? In *The Deserters*, **Mathias Énard** weaves together two lives marked by violence, asking what it takes to survive and what happens when cherished beliefs are tested. The novel, translated by Charlotte Mandell, won the 2026 French-American Foundation Translation Prize for Fiction. Énard, whose acclaimed novels include *Zone* and the Prix Goncourt-winning *Compass*, joins **Benoit Landon**, literary journalist and librarian at the French Library, to discuss how literature connects distant conflicts to the choices we face today.

This session is sponsored by Villa Albertine Boston.

11:30 am-12:30 pm

French Library, 1st Floor | ■

Anne Pauly on *Before I Forget*

Anne Pauly, with Bruno Perreau

What do we do with the memories of someone we loved who also hurt us? In *Before I Forget*, **Anne Pauly** confronts that question as she sorts through her father's belongings and prepares his funeral. He was a self-taught philosopher who loved haiku and kissed his late wife's photograph each night. He was also a violent man whose drinking scarred his family. With wit and tenderness, Pauly asks how we tell the story of a life that resists any simple account. She joins **Bruno Perreau**, Cynthia L. Reed Professor of French Studies at MIT, for a conversation about grief, family stories, and the people we struggle to understand. *This session is sponsored by Villa Albertine Boston and French & Francophone Studies at MIT.*

1:00 pm-2:00 pm | French Library, 1st Floor | ■

A Labor of Love: The Art of Literary Translation

Emma Ramadan and Sam Taylor, with Stéphanie Ravillon

What does it take to carry a writer's voice into another language? Award-winning translators **Emma Ramadan** and **Sam Taylor** discuss the creative choices, challenges, and discoveries behind their work. They also explore how translation introduces Francophone writers to new readers.. Ramadan has translated more than 40 books, including works by Abdellah Taïa, Annie Ernaux, and Virginie Despentes. Taylor has translated more than 70, including works by David Diop, Maylis de Kerangal, and Leïla Slimani. **Stéphanie Ravillon**, Associate Teaching Professor of French and Francophone Studies at Brown University, will guide the session. *This session is sponsored by Villa Albertine Boston.*

2:30 pm-3:30 pm | French Library, 1st Floor | ■

Simmons
UNIVERSITY

Celebrating
125 years of
Library and
Information
Science

Visit the Simmons booth to learn about our graduate and undergraduate programs, including those in writing, children's literature and library science that lead to all sorts of bookish careers!

Undergraduate



[simmons.edu/
go/bbf-ug](https://simmons.edu/go/bbf-ug)

Graduate



[simmons.edu/
go/bbf-grad](https://simmons.edu/go/bbf-grad)





BBF Unbound Saturday, Oct 17

Building a Memoir's Global World for an American Audience Xujun Eberlein, Lorena Hernández Leonard, Margaret Woo, with Alexis Chen Johnson

As our nation grapples with far-reaching anti-immigrant sentiment, this session takes up questions about how to engage U.S. readers on the subject of people often othered in American culture. Moderated by **Alexis Chen Johnson**, the panel features memoirists whose stories span three centuries and countries from Colombia to China: **Xujun Eberlain** (*The River Drowns the Able Swimmer*), **Lorena Hernández Leonard** (*Salsipuedes: Leave If You Can*), and **Margaret Woo** (*The City of Jade Trees*). How did they craft the landscapes of their stories for readers that may never experience those settings firsthand? How did they make the past legible for present-day readers? How did they work with the diverse cultures and languages that shaped their personal histories? Come to this session to learn how these writers shaped global narratives.

10:00 am - 11:00 am

Boston Public Library - Orientation Room | ■

GrubStreet presents Open Book: Novelists Answer Your Writing Questions

Steve Almond, **Yu-Mei Balasingamchow**, **Lori Gold**, and **Daniel José Older**, with **Lauren Artiles**

Curious about the process of bringing a book project into the world? Our panel of acclaimed novelists and teaching artists, featuring **Steve Almond**, **Yu-Mei Balasingamchow**, **Lori Gold**, and **Daniel José Older**, is here to answer all your burning questions about craft, publishing, and more.

10:15 am - 11:15 am

Boston Public Library - Commonwealth Salon | ■

Writing the Body: Narratives of Illness, Disability, and Witness

Alex Green, **Grace Talusan**, **Alysia Abbott**, with **Melanie Brooks**

At the heart of this session is the guiding principle of narrative medicine: the belief that stories serve as a vital bridge to human connection and empathy, and that illness and disability are lived experiences, not confined to clinical assessments. Memoirist **Melanie Brooks** (*A Hard Silence*) will lead this conversation about the value of centering stories of illness, disability, and caregiving when social forces continually marginalize, erase, and oversimplify the lives behind them. **Alysia Abbott** (*Fairyland*), **Alex Green** (*A Perfect Turmoil*), and **Grace Talusan** (*The Body Papers*) will take up questions including: How do we transform embodied experiences into compelling narratives? What responsibilities come with revealing our own or others' vulnerability? How can writers challenge stereotypes and express the intricacies of lives shaped by illness and disability? Together, these authors show that story can transform writer and reader, making lives too often misunderstood or overlooked visible.

11:00 am - 12:00 pm

First Church Auditorium | ■

Soilpunk: Growing radical futures

Yemi Amu, **Annie Chen**, **Zoe Lee**, with **Claire Gustavson**, **Lana Z Porter**

Across genres, there's an emerging movement of earth-based storytelling that imagines more hopeful futures on this planet. This session traces those visions from fiction to non-fiction, soil to sea. Co-founders **Annie Chen** and **Zoe Lee** of BEAM—a next-generation creative studio shaping the public life of emerging science—teach us to embrace our overlooked catch in their cookbook and field guide, *Eating the Whole Fish*. They will be joined by **Yemi Amu**, founder of Oku Farms, an aquaponics farm, educational center, and community hub in Brooklyn. Together, they show how speculative fiction and ecological practice can nourish one another—and how imagination becomes action. Hosted by **Lana Z Porter** and **Claire Gustavson**, founders and editors-in-chief of *Tractor Beam*, the first publication dedicated to soilpunk, with issue editors including Jeff VanderMeer, Leah Thomas, and Fatimah Asghar.

11:45 am - 12:45 pm

Boston Public Library - Commonwealth Salon | ■

Go Global: Writing International Issues and Reaching Readers Overseas

Amy M. Alvarez, **Anjali Mitter Duva**, **Kai Maristed**, with **Elizabeth Searle**

In a frank and timely discussion, this session will delve into writing fiction, in an intimate, personal style, that tackles international themes, including immigration, pandemics, and divisive politics. The session will share innovative ways to bypass the saturated U.S. market and reach a large pool of readers, including American ex-pats living overseas. Moderated by **Elizabeth Searle**, whose 2026 novel *Lock Her Up* has been released internationally, the panel will mix short readings with spirited conversation. Attendees will hear from novelist **Kai Maristed**, whose new collection, *The Age of Migration*, draws on her experiences living worldwide; poet **Amy M. Alvarez**, who won the 2025 American Book Award and the Caribbean Literary Conference Poetry Prize for *Makeshift Altar*; and **Anjali Mitter Duva**, award-winning Indian-American author of *Faint Promise of Rain* and co-founder of Galiot Press. Bring your questions for these bold writers and publishers, who are looking beyond this troubled country and "going global."

11:30 am - 12:30 pm

Boston Public Library - Orientation Room | ■



YA Sessions Saturday, Oct 17



Epic Tales Across the Globe: Retellings from India to New England

E. Lockhart, Rajani LaRocca

Join two celebrated authors of young people's literature, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of the *We Were Liars* series **E. Lockhart** and Newbery Honor-winning author, **Rajani LaRocca** in a conversation about the art of retelling. Crafting novels inspired by *The Wild*

Swans, now reimagined in a modern New England setting, and Hindu epic, *The Ramayana*, with a renewed focus on women, these authors explore coming of age from new angles of our past and present. In *The Pools*, Lockhart writes a love story full of simmering darkness and astonishing twists, following two teenagers whose lives are shattered by a shocking transformation. And in her YA debut, *Such Great Heights*, LaRocca's contemporary retelling of the *Ramayana* asks whether seeking the truth is always the right thing to do—or if sometimes the past is better left behind.

12:15 pm - 1:15 pm

BPL Teen Central | ■



YA Keynote: Renée Watson with Jasmine Guillory

Renée Watson and Jasmine Guillory

#1 *New York Times* bestseller, 2025 Newbery Medal winner, and *TIME* 2026 Visionary, **Renée Watson** shares her newest YA novel, *Everything New Again*. This tender, romantic story about beginnings, endings, and new beginnings again, follows two teens with deep

understandings of loss. As they open up to each other after a chance meeting, they find that even if a relationship has an end, love can last forever. Watson will be in conversation with *New York Times* bestselling author and Reese's Book Club pick, **Jasmine Guillory**, making her YA debut with a *Dirty Dancing*-inspired contemporary romcom, *It's Only Dancing*. Forced to quit ballet, Kat is determined to leave dance in the past. But when she meets Jordan, a handsome, magnetic hip-hop dance instructor, Kat will discover what she is willing to risk and if her love for dance can be reignited.

1:30 pm - 2:30 pm

BPL - Rabb Hall | ■



Fantasy Worlds and Falling In Love

Jennifer Lee, Elizabeth Lim, Maria Ingrand Mora

Three highly accomplished YA authors bring us breathtaking stories from across the fantasy spectrum—from steampunk dystopia to supernatural twists to bringing down the gods. **Maria Ingrand Mora's** *A Wild Radiance* is an epic and romantic fantasy that reimagines the War of the Currents. Follow Josephine Haven

as she finds out exactly where she fits into an oligarchic state on the verge of a magical industrial revolution. In Academy Award-winning writer and director of *Frozen* and *Frozen 2*, **Jennifer Lee's** *As I Dream of You* (graphic novel), falling in love is supposed to hurt. That's what Franny and Sam have come to understand. But when they fall for each other, they find the reality of love is something else entirely. Theirs is a love that can conquer anything...maybe even death. And in the breathtaking romantic fantasy, *A Forgery of Fate*, inspired by *Beauty and the Beast*, *New York Times* bestselling author **Elizabeth Lim** follows a girl who paints the future and a cursed dragon lord, who are bound by love and deception in a plot to bring down the gods.

1:45 pm - 2:45 pm

BPL Teen Central | ■



Secrets and Scandals: Coming of Age

Charlotte Lillie Balogh

Soon to be a major Hulu Series! *Capsized*, by **Charlotte Lillie Balogh**, is at once "a thrilling sports mystery about feminism and friendship" (*Booklist*) and a haunting coming-of-age story about an elite all-girls rowing team. Author and screenwriter Balogh has crafted a spellbinding mystery that explores the challenges of

navigating first loves and families, secrets and scandals. Join Balogh and **Kate Tuttle**, editor of the *Boston Globe's* books section, and former president of the National Book Critics Circle, for a fascinating conversation about women's sports and stories—and real-life superheroes.

3:15 pm - 4:15 pm

BPL Teen Central | ■

2026 SHELF HELP SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP RECIPIENT



In 2017, BBF launched its Self Help partnership program, a community-driven, kid-focused initiative aimed to expand a love of reading. In collaboration with Wondermore, a local nonprofit dedicated to inspiring young readers, BBF developed a competitive annual library to receive brand-new, high-quality, and culturally relevant books to fill its shelves as well as a memorable school visit by a celebrated children's author or illustrator.

This year, we're pleased to announce our 2026 recipient:

The John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science, Roxbury

Congratulations to The John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science for being this year's Shelf Help Program winner. The school's library will receive a minimum of 50 new books across genres, as well as an author visit from BBF 2026 Keynote Speaker Reneé Watson, organized by our partner Wondermore, which connects Boston-area students with authors and illustrators.

All Shelf Help donations will help the school's librarian, Keshia Koech, purchase books curated just for the O'Byrant school.

Go to www.bostonbookfest.org/donate and note 'Shelf Help' in the comment section.



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Kids

Saturday, Oct 17



Kids Keynote: Meg Medina and Claribel A. Ortega

You'll have to SEA these stories to believe them! Come together for this conversation with Newbery Medalist and best-selling children's author **Meg Medina** and *New York Times* bestselling author **Claribel A. Ortega** in this conversation about their new books. Medina's book *Graciela in the Abyss*

follows the unlikely friendship between sea-spirit Graciela and mortal Jorge, who is terrified of the water. The only way they can keep evil spirits from wreaking havoc on both the living and the dead is by working together and learning the power of the ocean—and the power inside all of us. Meanwhile, Ortega discusses the thrilling conclusion of *Witchlings: The Sea Witch Prophecy*. "KPop Demon Hunters meets Wicked," Seven, Valley and Thorn have to adventure out across land and sea to fulfill the prophecy and save their home. Together they are sure to delight readers and share magical stories of friendship, teamwork, and overcoming the odds.

This session is sponsored by Simmons University.

10:30 am - 11:30 am

Boston Public Library - Rabb Hall | ■



Monsters, Ghouls and Never Giving Up Haley Neil and Raúl the Third

With Halloween just around the corner, join **Haley Neil** and **Raúl the Third** as they share stories about new neighbors and not giving up. In Neil's "gleefully ghoulish yet tender" (*Booklist*) *Greta Grimsdarker and the Normal New Neighbor*, Greta—a human child in a spooky family, with zombie, vampire, and

ghost brothers—tries to make friends with her new, *normal* neighbor, and learns how scary friendship can be! Three-time Pura Belpré Award-winning author-illustrator Raúl the Third discusses his "outrageously creative" (*Jeff Kinney*) graphic novel *Tough Times: El Toro & Friends*, part of the bestselling Eisner-Nominated *World of ¡Vamos!* series. The rookie Kid Toro is on a losing streak until his coach reminds him about what's most important: it's not about getting knocked down that matters, it's what you do to get back up.

10:45 am - 11:45 am

Boston Public Library - Children's Rey Room | ■



Ghost Light: The Last Resort Sara Farizan

Get ready for some paranormal adventures with **Sara Farizan** and *Ghost Light*, the new installment of the wildly popular *The Last Resort* series, "a well-wrought genre-bender that's both spine-tingling and heartwarming" (*Kirkus*). Rosteen is dead—and yet here he is, brought back to The Last Resort by kids who

desperately need his help. He has nothing left to lose... except his new friends, who could lose everything and become ghosts themselves if they make one wrong move. Enter the world of The Last Resort! Talk to ghosts that come to life and help solve the mystery!

12:15 pm - 1:15 pm

Boston Public Library - Children's Rey Room | ■



Friendships and Finding Your Way Norm Feuti, Janae Marks, Sofia Warren, with Lori Lobenstine

How do you find your way in middle school without losing who you are? New England Book Award Finalist Norm Feuti's graphic novel *A Kid Like Me* follows sixth-grader Ethan as he tries to blend in despite his old phone and worn backpack. In *Starting*

Now—"a compassionate and nuanced story of interpersonal ties" (*PW*) by *New York Times*-bestselling author **Janae Marks**—Addy Thompson uncovers a family secret following her mother's accident that tests her friendships to a breaking point. And in *Film Nerds*, *The New Yorker* columnist **Sofia Warren**'s graphic novel debut, two best friends with a passion for DIY filmmaking find themselves facing their growing differences with the move to middle school. **Lori Lobenstine**, whose *The Barking Puppy* series grew from a collaboration with her goddaughter Sophie Canon, moderates this conversation about family dynamics and changing friendships.

1:45 pm - 2:45 pm

Boston Public Library - Children's Rey Room | ■

The Library of Memories

Barbara Perez Marquez and Lissy Marlin

Magic and mystery abound in *The Library of Memories*, "a joyous middle-grade fantasy graphic novel that gracefully explores grief" (*Shelf Awareness*, starred), written and illustrated by award-winning and bestselling storytellers **Barbara Perez Marquez** and **Lissy Marlin**—who just happen to be childhood friends from the Dominican Republic. Arriving at the library one day with little memory of who she is, Copenhagen has been stuck there ever since. She spends her days preserving the library alongside wise mechanical creatures who tend to its care, but the longer she stays, the more she forgets. To find her memories and save the library, Copenhagen will have to journey further than she ever has before. "Stunning and unlike anything I've ever read" (*Colleen AF Venable*), this is a book to savor. Come hear these two creators share how they wove this spellbinding story about what we want to remember.

3:15 pm - 4:15 pm

Boston Public Library - Children's Rey Room | ■

The Plymouth Rock Assurance Foundation is proud to support

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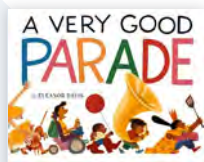


Story Times

An outstanding lineup of award-winning authors and illustrators share their books in interactive read-aloud sessions filled with imagination, creativity, and fun.

Sponsored by The Boston Globe Foundation and Globe Santa.

10:00 - 2:45 pm | Boston Public Children's Library | ■



10:30 am - 11:00 am |

Storytime! Eleanor Davis

March from the BBF Costume Parade right into award-winning cartoonist Eleanor Davis's storytime: *A Very Good Parade*! Watch as Gabby sets out with her grandma to invite her friends and neighbors to come together for a silly, noisy, righteous, and just plain fun day!

Ages 4-8

11:15 pm - 11:45 pm |

Storytime! Gary R. Gray, Jr.

Boston Globe-Horn Book Honor recipient Gary R. Gray, Jr. welcomes you into this poetic and joyful tale about sharing time with the people you love. Grandpa and his grandson have lots of errands to do, but they don't need to rush to get it all done! There's plenty of time for picking blackberries and waving at neighbors as they spend a golden day together.

Ages 4-8



12:00-12:30 | **Storytime! Brian Lies**

What's this? Diffy the fish found a mysterious object on top of his favorite rock! He starts to invent stories about what it might be as more fish gather around. Then they start telling stories as well, until... Oh no! Diffy's discovery disappears! Join Caldecott Honoree Brian Lies to discover what happens next.

Ages 4-8

12:45 pm - 1:15 pm | **Storytime! Sibū T.P.**

When Aabanya visits her grandfather on Early Mountain she feels at home helping him and listening to his stories. In town she feels out of place, as people look at her with questions in their eyes. *Who are you? Where are you from? Why are you here?* With her grandfather's help—and a surprising encounter with a bear—Aabanya remembers *The Ones Who Came Before*. Illustrator Sibū T. P. shares this evocative story about connection and belonging.

Ages 4-8



2:15 pm - 2:45 pm | **Storytime! Edwidge Danticat**

Leila is ready for school, bundled up in her red jacket on an unusually cold Miami day. "Watch out for falling iguanas!" her Grandma Issa says. What does that mean? Join Edwidge Danticat and follow along as Leila and her friends discover why these tropical creatures really do fall from trees!

Ages 4-8

Drop in to the BBF Brainstorm Tent for a day full of creativity. Some of your favorite book characters will be there to say hello!

Brainstorm Tent

Join Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) as we celebrate 60 years of reading with a day of literacy fun!

For 60 years, RIF has worked to put books into the hands of children, and we're celebrating this milestone by **giving away free books at the Boston Book Festival!** Take a trip back to 1966—the year RIF was founded—and enjoy reading activities inspired by the era, including writing and mailing a postcard and practicing cursive on a chalkboard. Enjoy a special read-aloud and activity led by Angela DiTerlizzi, author of *The Magical Yet*, spin the prize wheel, and stop by our retro photo booth for a fun keepsake. Free books will be available while supplies last!

This celebration is made possible through the generous support of RIF partners Sylvamo, Driscoll's, AMETEK, International Paper, and ACCO Brands.

10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Exhibitor Area



Face-painting, Costume Characters and More!

Visit the exhibitor area to have your face painted and take a picture with costume characters Arthur and Molly of Denali, who will be by the Brainstorm Tent (led by Reading Is Fundamental). While you're in the exhibitor area, keep an eye out for Waldo! Candlewick Press presents a Where's Waldo activity for all to play!

Kids Costume Parade

10:00 am Costume Parade for Kids



Come dressed as your favorite book character to help us officially open the Boston Book Festival for its 18th year. Join our parade led by Eleanor Davis, author of *A Very Good Parade*, to the Children's Room for storytime!

The parade will gather inside the Boylston Street Building at the BPL Central Library in Copley Square for opening remarks, before marching to the Children's Room for the opening storytime!



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Carl Martignetti
Ann Owens
Tim Phillips
Ori Porat
Tracy Rubin
Jody Snider
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Anthony Tjan
Barrie R Zesiger

Poet

Albert R. Malo & Jeanne M. Butler
Alba Alvarez Cote
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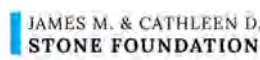
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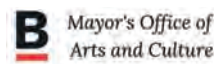
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