

OHIO *ana* QUARTERLY

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Collecting, Preserving, and Celebrating Ohio Literature

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From the Director



Dear Friends,

“It’s spring fever. That is what the name of it is. And when you’ve got it, you want—oh, you don’t quite know what it is you do want, but it just fairly makes your heart ache, you want it so!” – Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain)

Mark Twain was not an Ohioan, but he was certainly familiar with and popular in Ohio, crisscrossing the state two dozen times during his remarkable career as America’s favorite humorist and lecturer.

For the Ohioana Library, “spring fever” means one thing for certain: the Ohioana Book Festival, the state’s largest celebration of Ohio authors and books. As you can see from our cover story, we’re celebrating a major milestone this year—the festival’s 15th anniversary! After having to move last year’s festival to August due to the pandemic, we’re happy to say the event is back in its usual time slot at the end of April. However, like 2020, the festival will again be held virtually so that we can celebrate safely with everyone.

There’s so much to offer at the festival, we’ve extended it to a record four days this year—from April 22 through April 25. Nearly 140 Ohio authors and illustrators will be taking part. One of them, cartoonist Tom Batiuk, has created the poster artwork for our 15th anniversary, which features Tom’s lovable bookstore owner-turned-author Lillian from his popular *Crankshaft* comic strip. I know you’ll enjoy Kathryn Powers’ interview with Tom, and a look back at Lillian’s book festival adventures. We’re also revisiting festival memories shared by authors, volunteers, and friends from over the years.

Also in this issue, you’ll find a list of books recently added to our collection. And because summer is not far off, and it’s looking more promising for everyone to be able to again travel, we’re featuring a review of *The Ohio Literary Trail: A Guide*, the companion book to Ohioana’s newest program, introduced last summer. We’re thrilled at the tremendous response it has received, and hopefully soon, people will be able to hit the road and visit the places on the trail!

Having “spring fever” is definitely better this year than it was a year ago, and I hope your spring will be a healthy and happy one. We invite you to join us for all of our 15th anniversary Ohioana Book Festival programs and festivities. **Thank you** for making it possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Weaver'.

David Weaver
Executive Director

ON THE COVER

Cover designed by Kathryn Powers and adapted from the official 15th anniversary Ohioana Book Festival poster art created by Tom Batiuk. Read the interview with Tom on page 16.

The 2021 Ohioana Book Festival: Celebrating 15 Years!

by David Weaver

The Ohioana Book Festival is celebrating its 15th anniversary . . . and we'd love to have you join us for this special occasion! We'll be celebrating virtually from April 22 through April 25.

While we had hoped our anniversary festival would be an in-person event this year, by going virtual as we did in 2020, we can continue keeping everyone safe while at the same time bringing all the things festival-goers love about our event: a fun-filled weekend featuring panel discussions, conversations, and readings. There will be story times and activities for children, and books will be available to purchase through www.bookloft.com. With something for every reader, the festival is a book lover's dream. And with the virtual format, now everyone can join in, no matter where they live!

Nearly 140 Ohio authors and illustrators, representing every genre—from picture books to poetry, from novels to nonfiction—are taking part in our anniversary event. Among them are more than a dozen Ohioana Book Award winners, nearly twenty authors honored on the Choose to Read Ohio and Floyd's Pick lists, four winners of the Cleveland Arts Prize, a National Book Award winner, two Pulitzer Prize finalists, and Ohio's Poet Laureate. We're excited that, in addition to many popular authors making return visits to the festival, we have more than thirty authors who are making their first appearance with their debut books. It's always a thrill to introduce readers to the new authors who may soon become their favorites!

The very first Ohioana Book Festival was built around a single book entitled *Good Roots: Writers Reflect on Growing Up in Ohio*. Ten authors who contributed to that book came to Columbus for one day in September 2007. The original event took place at the renovated Jeffrey Mining Corporate Center, where the Ohioana Library collection and offices are located. As the festival grew over the years, it changed venues to accommodate the larger author roster and audience: in 2011, it relocated to Fort Hayes Metropolitan Education Center; in 2015, it moved to the Sheraton Columbus Hotel at Capital Square, where we celebrated the 10th anniversary Ohioana Book Festival in 2016 (complete with Ohio-shaped cookies); and in 2019, it arrived at its new home at the Columbus Metropolitan Library's Main Library in the heart of downtown.



David Catrow, Amanda Flower, Mindy McGinnis, Del Sroufe, and Jacqueline Woodson at the 2016 Ohioana Book Festival.

Photo by Mary Rathke.

Today, the Ohioana Book Festival is the largest event in Ohio that celebrates our state's authors, reaching an audience of avid fans that expands with every passing year. And with a new digital viewership that began with our first virtual festival events in 2020, we're thrilled to introduce Ohio's literary talent to readers all over the world!

No one ever imagined how much the festival would grow and evolve since that first event in 2007. We're so grateful for the authors, sponsors, donors, partners, staff, and volunteers who have joined us on this journey for a decade and a half. We hope you'll enjoy reading some of their favorite festival memories in our special anniversary feature on the following pages.

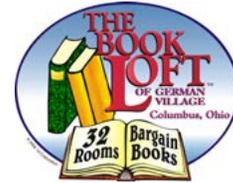
Most of all, we couldn't have done it without people like you who share our love of books and reading. **You** have made this 15th anniversary possible. We hope you enjoy celebrating this milestone with us from the comfort of your own home. You can find complete details regarding the 2021 festival schedule and programs by visiting our website, www.ohioana.org, and also by checking us out on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We'll see you at the festival!

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Festival Memories

2007-2020

As we celebrate the Ohioana Book Festival's 15th anniversary, let's take a fond look back at past events with favorite recollections shared by authors, volunteers, and friends.

In 2019, the Ohioana Book Festival paired me with Rutherford B. Hayes High School for an exhilarating pre-festival school visit. From auditorium sessions with hundreds of students to meeting with the Social Justice Book Club, there was a literary magic in motion. I watched reluctant readers imagine themselves as possible storytellers. I listened to dedicated readers discuss how we, as authors, and they, as young people, could make effective change in the stories that are written. Outreach with youth is integral to the activism I do off the page. The Ohioana Book Festival recognizes the importance and necessity of author/student conversations, and I'm so elated they do!

e.E. Charlton-Trujillo, author

A costumed character signals permission for those encountered to have fun, say silly things, and act goofy. The youngest children may be scared, and some older ones pull my tail, but most people smile warmly. Early childhood development studies report the importance of play, but does it ever end? I love contributing a little foolishness to the festival's atmosphere, and indulging in my moment of anonymous fame.

When I'm not walking around in a costume, I can vouch for the Ohioana Book Festival's ability to create memorable moments between readers and authors. Usually lacking a gift for two special dates in May—my mom's birthday and Mother's Day—I repeatedly found something, inscribed on request, in the authors' expo at the festival. One festival, after buying a gift book in the same series from a returning author each of the two prior years, I found the same author back again. She greeted me by asking, "How's your mother?" They had never met her, and I never encountered the author outside these annual festivals. The author's memory and courtesy rendered a momentary sense of my mother's importance in a world which saw little of her in her last years. Such small kindnesses enhance days and lives.

*Brian Stettner, volunteer
(Library Mouse and Clifford the Big Red Dog)*

One of my favorite memories comes from my inaugural Ohioana in 2010—right after my first book was published, *No Winners Here Tonight*. We crowded into the State Library of Ohio building on East First Avenue—Ohioana's headquarters—and my moment in the sun came when veteran *Columbus Dispatch* statehouse reporter Lee Leonard introduced me and I read a selection from the book. Despite the tight quarters that year, this experience, along with meeting readers and other Ohio writers, was a seminal moment that inspired me to continue plugging away at my craft.

Andrew Welsh-Huggins, author

I have so many favorite Ohioana Book Festival memories: The wonderful and stunningly well-organized Ohioana Library team who make me feel like a member of their family. The welcoming and super helpful event volunteers. Book lovers with whom I could chat for hours about the joys of reading. But there's one memory that illustrates to me how supportive our community of book lovers is.

Several years ago, after my first *Sister Lou Mystery* novel was published, *Mayhem & Mass*, I was thrilled and honored to participate on a cozy mystery author panel. It was great fun. But then we came to the final question and the moderator asked something like, "Tell us about the pets in your cozy mystery." My heart stopped, and when it restarted, I could hear it without a stethoscope.

The reason I was so nervous to address this question is that although there's a cat on the cover of *Mayhem & Mass*, the story itself doesn't have a cat. The moderator presented the question to each of the first three authors. Then she came to me. I took a breath, looked out into the audience and said, "My friends, I've been living a lie."

I explained that I'd asked my publisher to remove the cat from the cover because it's misleading. But my publisher had refused, leaving me with a cat on the cover of a book that didn't have a cat. After I'd made my confession, members of the audience laughed good-naturedly. To my extreme gratitude and relief, they greeted the situation with empathy instead of condemnation.

Patricia Sargeant/Olivia Matthews, author

My first year (2009, I think), I was assigned a spot at the signing table right beside R. L. Stine, and I was intimidated, to say the least. I mean, this was R. L. STINE! He'd sold a kazillion books! And . . . they were really creepy books, you know?

When the festival started, both of us were busy signing for a while. But at the first break, he immediately looked over at me, smiled the friendliest smile, stuck out his hand, and said, "Call me Bob." And I found out—just like everyone else who met him that day—that R. L. (er, Bob) Stine is one of the nicest people you could ever encounter. Despite the terrifying books.

Also my first year: Becca Dangler, a then-fourth-grader who is the daughter of OSU employee Doug Dangler, showed up to inform me that she had been assigned as my author handler. I thanked her for volunteering, but didn't expect to need much in the way of "handling." Amazingly, though, the rest of the day, anytime I started to think, "Wow, I've got a lot of people waiting on me to sign books, but what I really need right now is . . .," Becca would kind of magically show up and hand me a water bottle—or can of Diet Coke, or extra Post-It notes, or whatever else I'd barely had time to realize I wanted or needed. It felt like she could read my mind. She got me to all my panels on time, and scouted out where I was supposed to be and when, long before I'd had even a second to think about it. To this day, I count her as one of the best "author handlers" I've ever worked with. And she was like that as a fourth grader! I joked with her that she even had the best name for the job—I said anytime she needed a recommendation, I'd be happy to tell anyone about, "Becca Dangler, Author Wrangler!"

Margaret Peterson Haddix, author

One memory that stands out for me was the very first Ohioana Book Festival I attended. I think it was 2011 or 2012, when it was held at the Fort Hayes Campus. I had volunteered to help with the SCBWI table and when my shift was over, I wandered into one of the programs. Daniel Kirk and Rae Carson were talking to the group about living the creative life. I had been writing for years and dreaming of publishing, but lately all of my focus was on publishing and less and less on the actual writing craft part. Listening to Daniel and Rae talk about how they spent their days and how they approached their work was illuminating.

A couple of years later, there I was, on a panel myself, with two amazing writers who would one day become my good friends, Natalie Richards and Mindy McGinnis.

Jody Casella, author

Honestly I don't know if I have a favorite memory, I just love the feel of Ohioana. All my friends are there. I love all of the Ohio festivals, but Ohioana is where I absolutely know I will see everyone. It's always a good time . . . selling books is just a by-blow!

Mindy McGinnis, author

I've sold hundreds of books at Ohioana, but that's not why this festival is important to Ohio or to me. At Ohioana, I've had the chance to meet writers who changed my life for the better, even unexpectedly becoming my best friends and writing partners. I've also had the chance to talk with hundreds of readers over the years. One particular young reader I'll always remember was thirteen when I first met her, and I loved chatting with her every year thereafter. During our last in-person Ohioana Book Festival, she told me she'd been accepted into a creative writing program and was pursuing her own writing dreams. I watched an awesome girl grow into a bright and focused young woman through Ohioana. Forming these connections are one of the best parts of the writing life and a powerful reminder of why it's such a gift to be an author.

Natalie Richards, author

I have such fond memories of the 2011 Ohioana Book Festival at Fort Hayes, my first time as a volunteer. The festival had grown every year since its inception, and by 2011, we had so many people in the space at Fort Hayes that we had to turn sideways to squeeze past each other in the halls. The place was buzzing with energy. It was like going to a rock concert! What a pleasure to be surrounded in that way by authors and illustrators and people who simply love books. I was honored to introduce poet Maggie Smith that year. I remember watching the crowd beam at Maggie while she read us some lovely poems. It was the first time I'd met a published poet, and that simple connection forever enriched and expanded my appreciation for poetry. The Ohioana Book Festival is always educational and joyous. It's one of my favorite annual events.

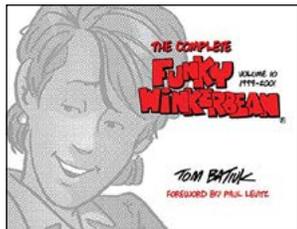
Michelle Gubola, volunteer

For more festival memories and photos, visit our blog on the Ohioana website.

Background photo of the 2019 Ohioana Book Festival by Mary Rathke.

Festival Authors

FICTION



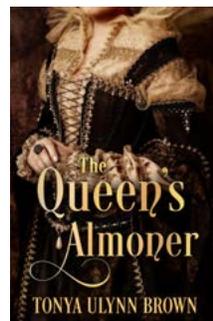
Tom Batiuk



Pete Beatty



Matt Betts



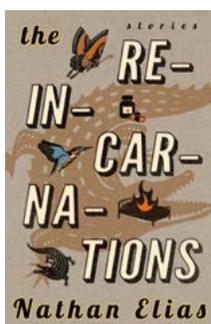
Tonya Ulynn Brown



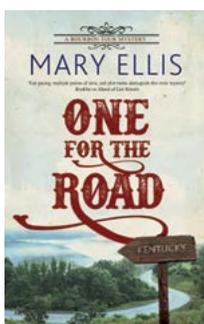
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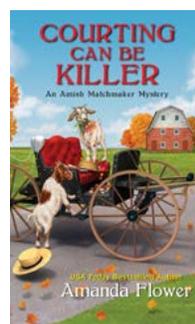
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Nathan Elias



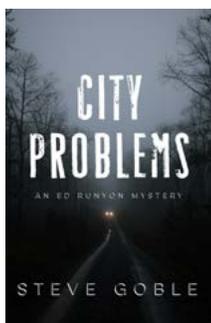
Mary Ellis



Amanda Flower



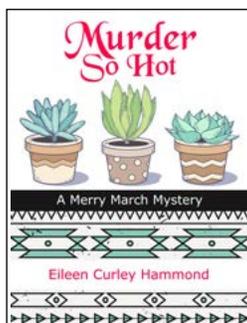
Jennifer Geiger



Steve Goble



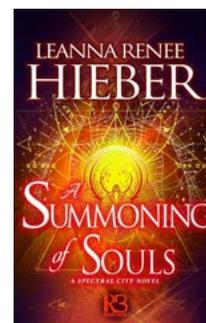
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Eileen Curley Hammond



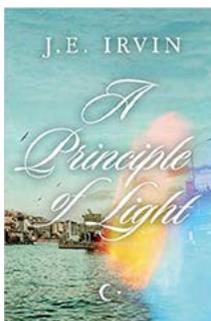
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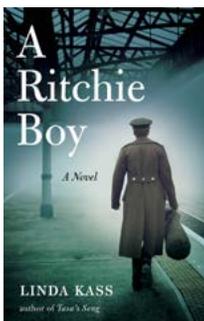
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Anna Lee Huber



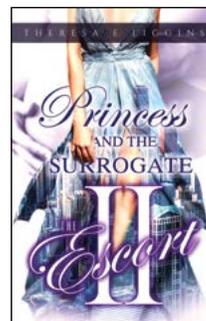
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Linda Kass



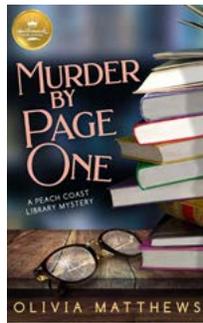
John-Michael Lander



Theresa E. Liggins



Kylie Logan aka
Lucy Ness



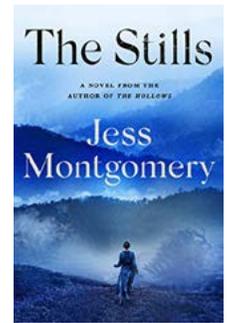
Olivia Matthews



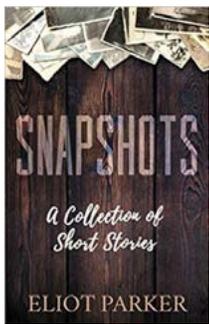
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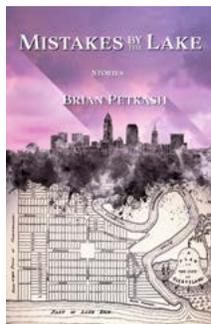
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Jess Montgomery



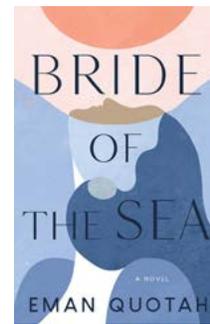
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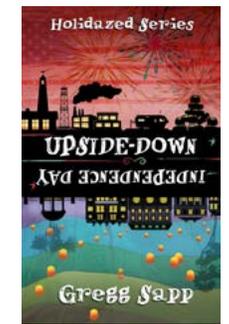
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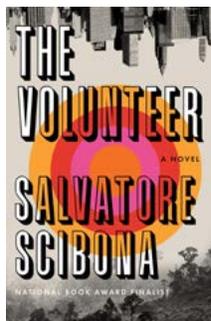
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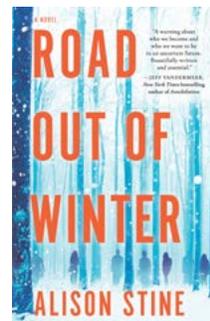
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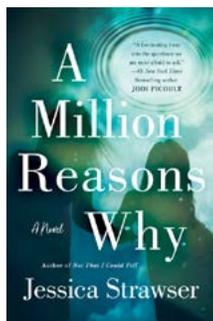
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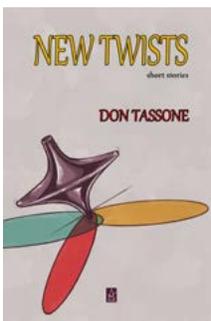
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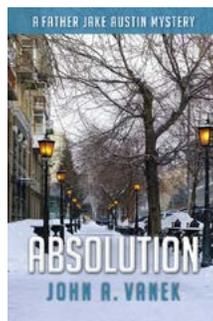
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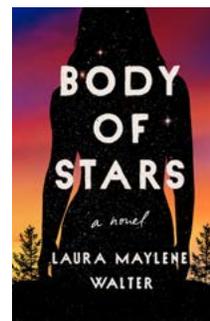
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Don Tassone



John A. Vanek

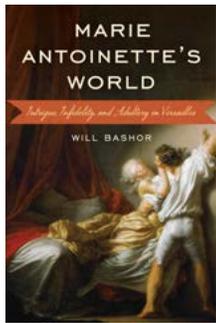


Laura Maylene
Walter

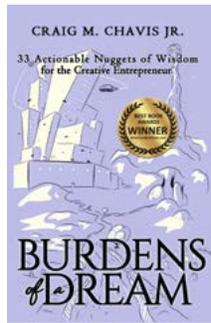


Donna Wyland

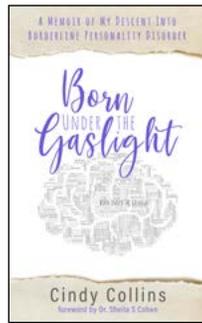
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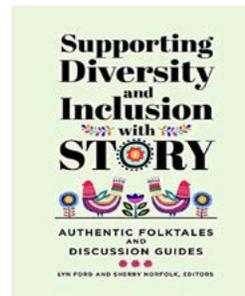
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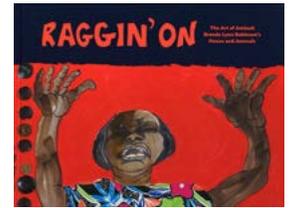
Craig M. Chavis, Jr.



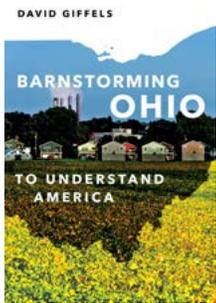
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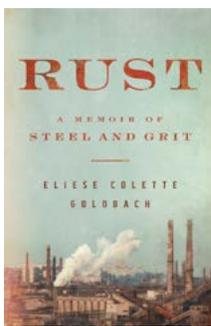
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Carole Genshaft



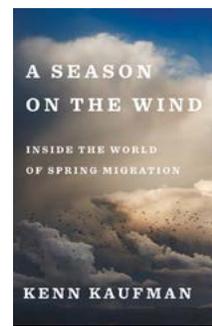
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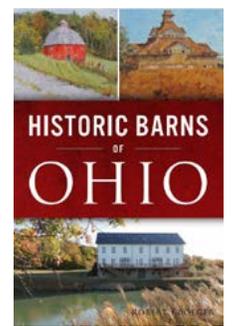
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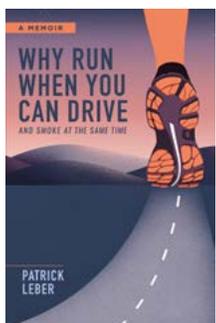
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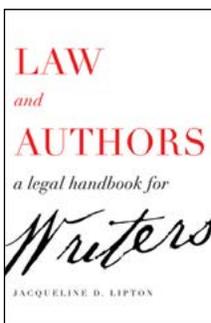
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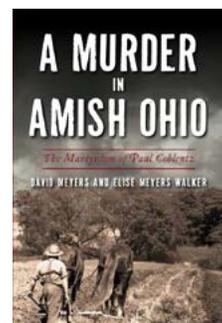
Robert Kroeger



Patrick Leber



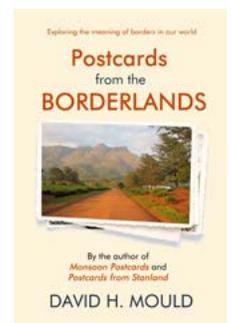
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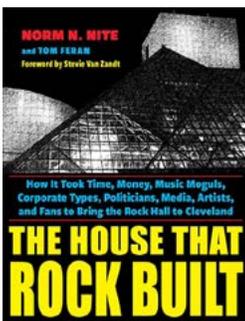
David Meyers & Elise Meyers Walker



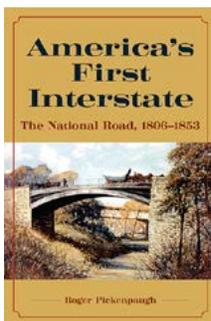
Denise Monique



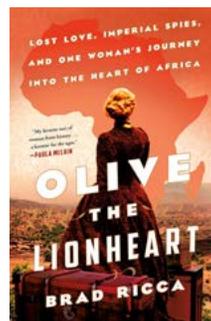
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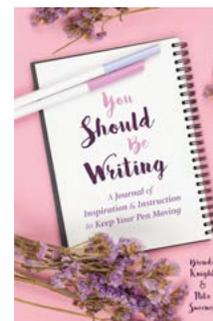
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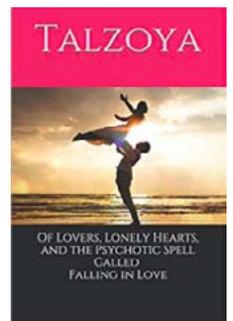
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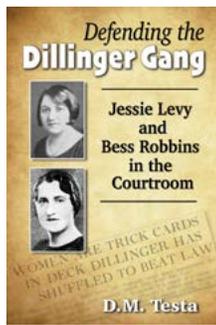
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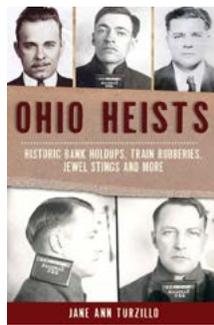
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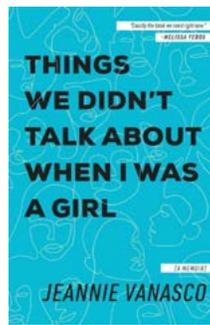
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D. M. Testa



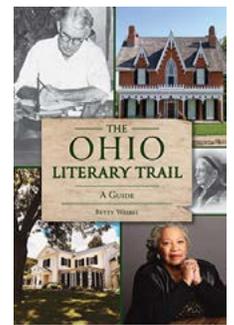
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Jeannie Vanasco

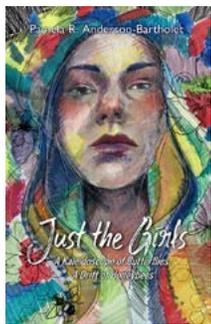


Elissa Washuta



Betty Weibel

POETRY



Pamela R. Anderson



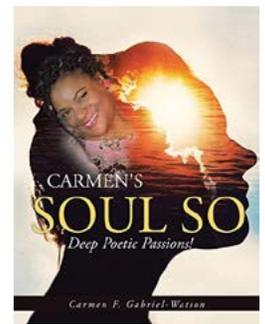
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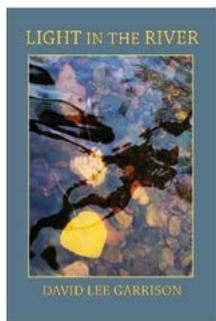
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Darren C. Demaree



Carmen Gabriel-Watson



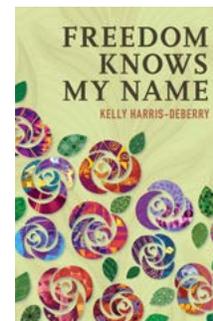
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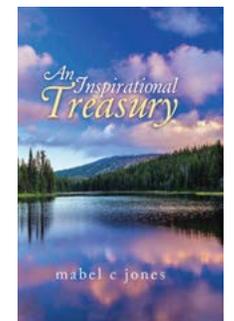
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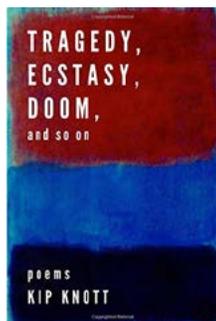
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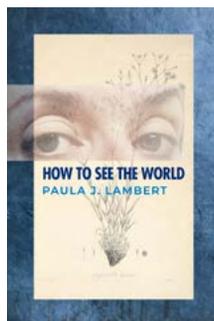
Kelly Harris-DeBerry



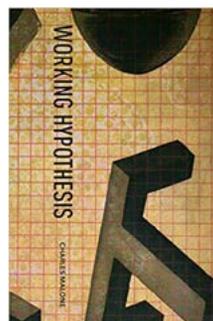
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Kip Knott



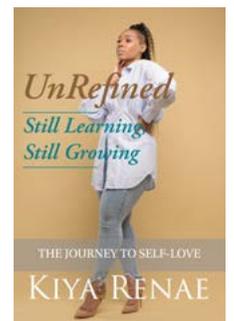
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Charles Malone



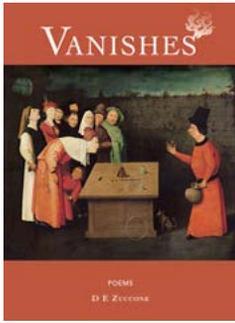
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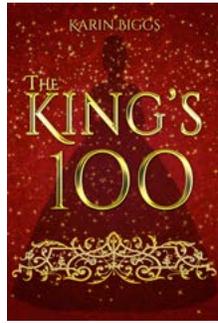
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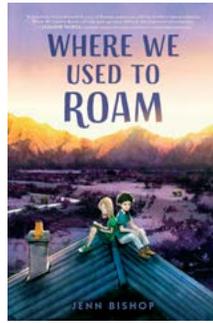
YOUNG ADULT & MIDDLE GRADE



D E Zuccone



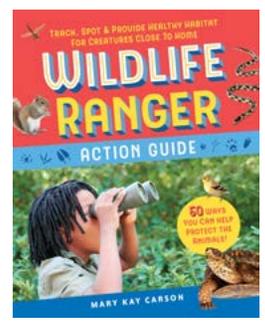
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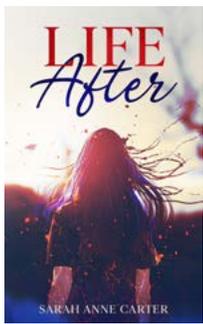
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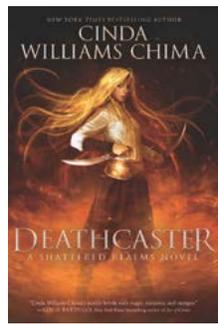
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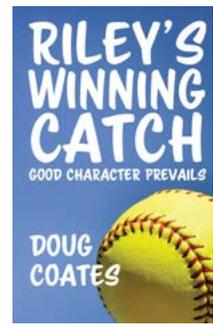
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Sarah Anne Carter



Cinda Williams Chima



Doug Coates



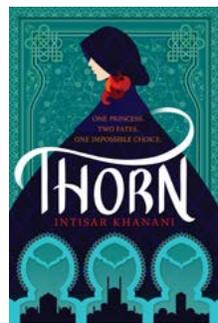
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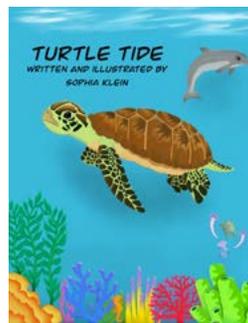
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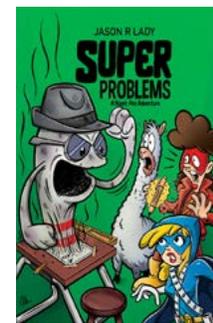
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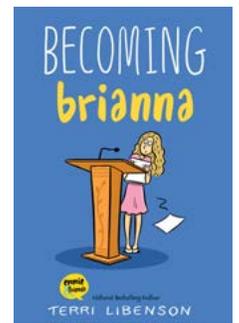
Intisar Khanani



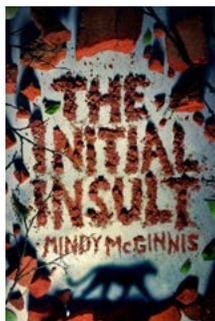
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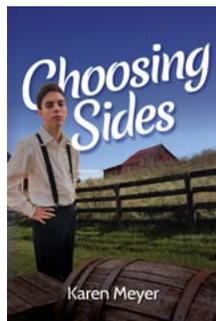
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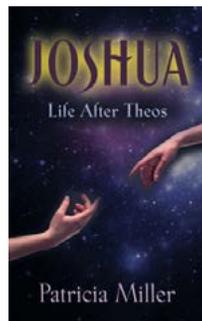
Terri Libenson



Mindy McGinnis



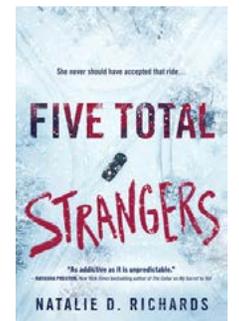
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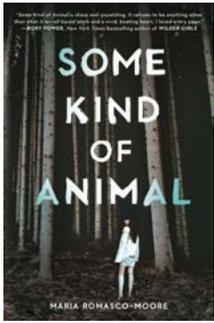
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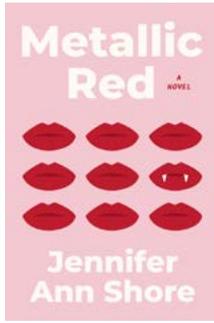
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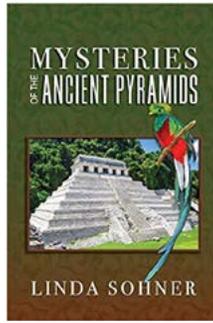
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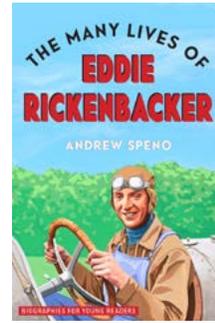
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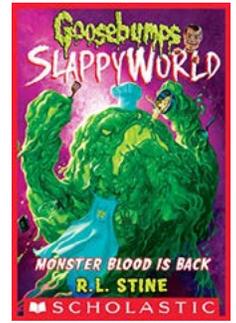
Jennifer Ann Shore



Linda Sohner



Andrew Speno



R. L. Stine

JUVENILE



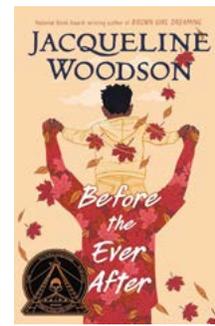
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D. W. Vogel



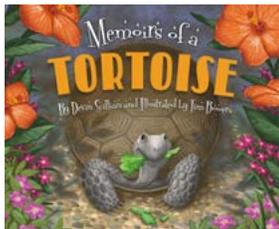
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Jacqueline Woodson



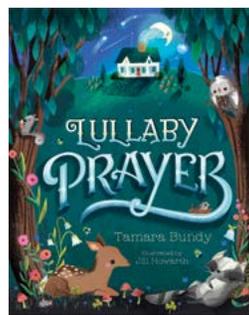
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Tim Bowers



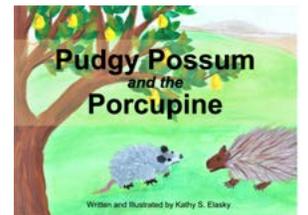
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Tamara Bundy



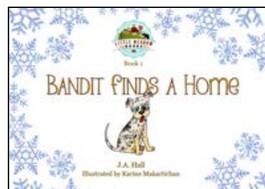
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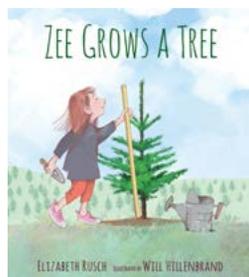
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Rebecca Greenfield



J. A. Hall



Will Hillenbrand

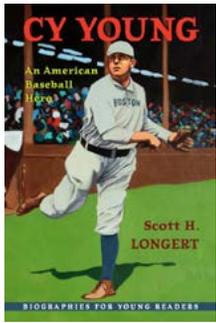


Kate Hoefler



Aiko Ikegami

JUVENILE (contd.)



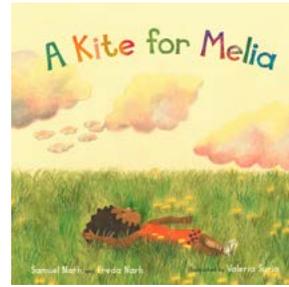
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Mark Miesse



Oge Mora



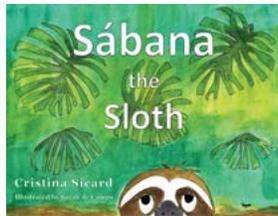
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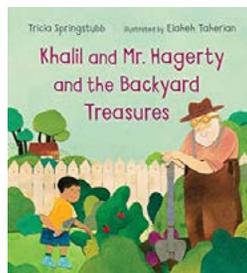
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Merrill Rainey



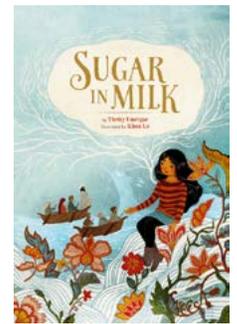
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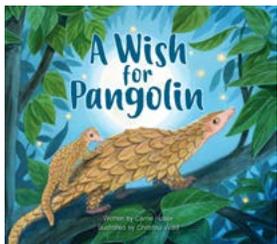
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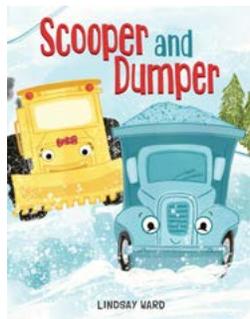
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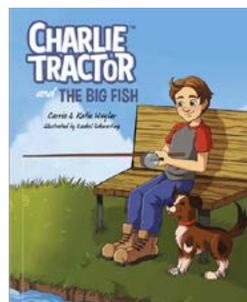
Thrity Umrigar



Christina Wald



Lindsay Ward



Katie Weyler & Carrie Weyler

ART COLUMBUS MAKES MAKES COLUMBUS ART

ColumbusMakesArt.com
#artmakescbs

I AM SCOTT WOODS. WRITING IS MY ART.

I love proving people wrong about the power of poetry. I love making people laugh where they thought they would be bored, or agitated where they might otherwise be cool and dismissive. Columbus exists in an artistic sweet spot: it has a lot of people who want art, and enough resources for artists to create their own opportunities to engage those people. I am Scott Woods, writing is my art and there's no place I'd rather make it.

Learn more about Scott's story and other Columbus artists, performances, exhibitions, concerts, public art and more at ColumbusMakesArt.com.



Columbus Cultural
Leadership Consortium



Greater Columbus
Arts Council



Greater Columbus
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Supporting and advancing
the arts and cultural fabric
of Columbus.

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An Interview with Tom Batiuk

by Kathryn Powers



Tom Batiuk

The 2021 Ohioana Book Festival poster was designed by comic strip creator Tom Batiuk, featuring his Crankshaft character Lillian. We spoke with Tom about his creative process and Lillian's history at the Ohioana Book Festival.

Q What was the inspiration behind your poster design to commemorate the Ohioana Book Festival's 15th anniversary?

A In my comic strip *Crankshaft*, the character Lillian McKenzie owns a small bookstore. I thought that the idea of her reading to a group of children was a nice way to show how reading spans the generations and is a lifelong pleasure.

Q What inspired you to become an illustrator? Was there a specific book, author, or artist that sparked your passion?

A It was my dad reading the Sunday comics in the newspaper to me when I was young. I could see that there was magic happening there, and I made up my mind that I wanted to become a cartoonist and make a little magic myself.

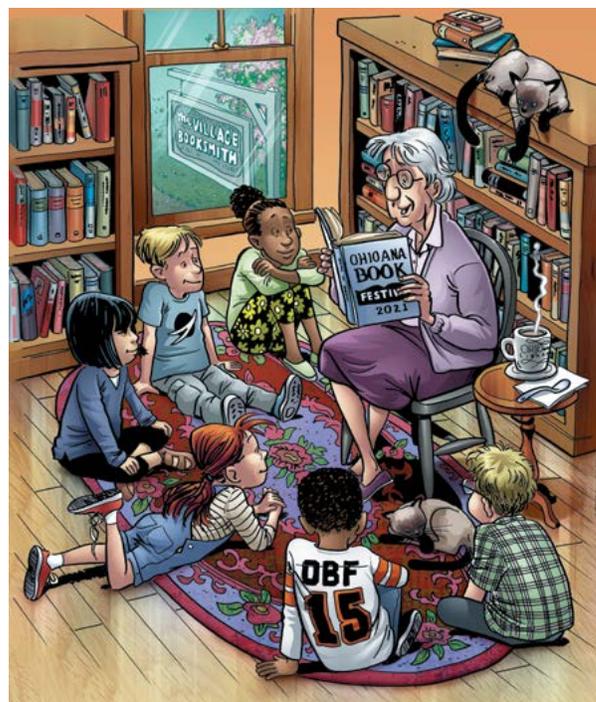
Q Can you tell us how you create your comics and illustrations? Are you a meticulous planner, or do you let your muse run wild?

A It's actually both. I'm diligent enough to be a year ahead on both *Funky Winkerbean* and *Crankshaft*, which allows me to spend a lot of time just letting ideas roll around in my head until they're ready to be used.

Q This is not only the 15th anniversary of the Ohioana Book Festival, but the 5th anniversary of Lillian being part of it. How did the idea of having Lillian be a festival author come about?

A I was at the festival and saw an author there with a themed mystery series, and I thought that might be fun for Lillian to try. So I had her come to the Ohioana Book Festival as a fan, return the next year as someone wanting to know how to get published, and finally return to the festival as a successfully published author.

Ohioana hosted Tom for a virtual conversation and poster unveiling on February 16, 2021, kicking off the book festival's 15th anniversary festivities. You can view a recording of the event on the Ohioana Library YouTube channel.



LILLIAN'S 5 YEARS AT THE OHIOANA BOOK FESTIVAL



2017



2018



2019



2020



2021



WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHERE LILLIAN'S JOURNEY TAKES HER NEXT!

The Ohio Literary Trail: A Guide

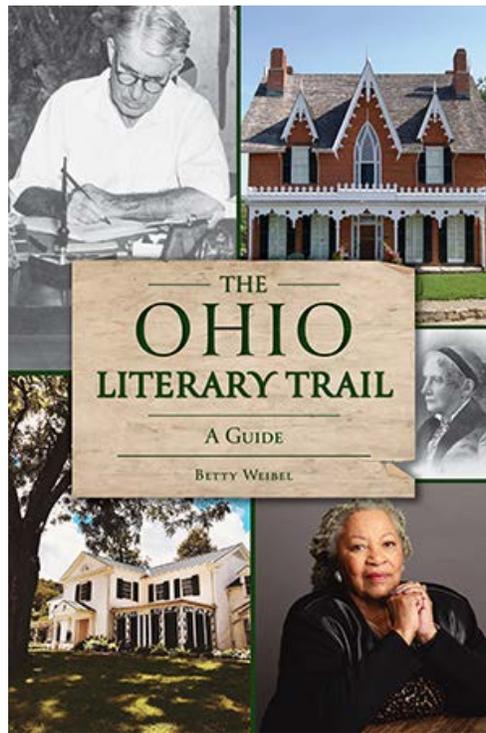
A Review by Morgan Peters, Ohioana Program Coordinator

If you're a frequent reader of the *Ohioana Quarterly*, then you're likely more aware of Ohio's literary significance than most. You probably know about many of the notable authors and literary locations around the state. Even so, if you've had the chance to look over the Ohio Literary Trail, which debuted on www.ohioana.org last summer, then you might have found out that there was so much still to discover. This is the main goal of the trail: to introduce Ohio's rich literary prominence to Ohioans, travelers, and readers everywhere.

The year following the trail's debut has been tumultuous and unusual. The COVID-19 pandemic has put much of our lives on hold, and that includes piling into the car for a road trip. In that sense, it may have seemed like an inopportune time to unveil a program focused on traveling. Fortunately, the opposite has been true: the Ohio Literary Trail serves as an incredible resource for Ohioans who are looking for an excursion that doesn't take them across state lines, allows them to stay socially distant, and provides them with something new and valuable while fostering pride and interest in their home state. Many of the stops on the trail are outside or viewable from afar, which makes them easy and safe to visit.

Now, a year after the debut of the trail online, author and Ohioana trustee Betty Weibel—the mastermind behind the Ohio Literary Trail—continues to expand upon the original project with a full travel guide titled *The Ohio Literary Trail: A Guide*. Using Weibel's own words, the *Guide* is described as “a convenient travel guide to introduce you to Ohio's literary accomplishments and encourage further exploration.” The *Guide* seeks to expand upon the original map of sixty-one unique marked locations with descriptions, details, and historical context. And it does just that.

The Ohio Literary Trail, as well as the *Guide*, divides the state of Ohio into five unique regions, which can be called the “Five Ohios:” Northwest, Northeast, Central, Southwest, and Southeast. The *Guide* then explores each of these regions in detail, breaking them down further to explore individual counties. Within each county, the locations on the trail are further divided into subtypes of literary landmarks, historical markers, and festivals. Museums, libraries, and historic homes fall into the category of literary landmarks, while historical markers are a collection of about 1,700 unique plaques that are a result of a program headed by the Ohio History Connection. These markers are more “short stops” on the trail, located primarily in public places such as parks and marking significant locations or people. Finally, although the numbered locations on the trail focus on Ohio's literary heritage, Weibel takes care also to mention an annual book fair or festival from each region, which are ongoing celebrations of the continuously evolving literary culture of the state.



This breakdown of landmarks, markers, and festivals makes the *Guide* incredibly convenient to use—for example, if you find yourself in Lucas County, it's easy then to flip the book open to the Northwest section, navigate to Lucas, and discover that you are near the *Nancy Drew* Collection at the Toledo Lucas County Public Library. From there, you can read more about Mildred “Millie” Wirt Benson, who was the original Carolyn Keene, author of the wildly popular *Nancy Drew* books. While you page through the Lucas County section, you may then be inclined to stop by the historical marker for Toledo's First High School and Lucas County Public Library. If you don't have time for every stop, there's no need to worry—the *Guide* includes the full text of every marker included on the trail.

The Ohio Literary Trail: A Guide and the entire Ohio Literary Trail project is a love letter to Ohio and its rich literary legacy. From small towns on the shores of Lake Erie, to the busy streets of our largest cities, to the wild and wonderful parks and reserves around the state, Ohio is full of beauty and literary greatness. These locations and authors deserve to be recognized and celebrated, and the trail delivers on that. The authors and books mentioned on the trail span time periods, genres, and topics, ensuring that there is something to interest you regardless of your literary preferences.

The Ohio Literary Trail shines most brightly when you learn about a marker or location that exists practically in your own backyard that you never knew about. In those moments, there's magic in opening up the *Guide* and reading more about your new discovery. For longtime residents of Ohio who may feel that they have seen it all, the *Guide* can widen their eyes to a wealth of undiscovered locations. For newer Ohioans, the *Guide* is a wonderful companion for unlocking the gems and secrets of the Buckeye State. Whichever category you fall into—lifelong Ohioan, Ohio transplant, or visitor—*The Ohio Literary Trail: A Guide* should accompany you on your travels as you explore, learn, and read.

To view the Ohio Literary Trail map with links to literary landmarks, markers, and festivals, please visit <http://www.ohioana.org/resources/the-ohio-literary-trail/>.



Top: Hart Crane Historical Marker. Photo credit: Ohio History Connection. Middle: Library Room at The Wagnalls Memorial Library. Photo credit: The Wagnalls Memorial Library. Bottom: McGuffey House and Historical Marker. Photo Credit: Ohio History Connection.

Book List

The following books were added to Ohioana's collection between December 2020 and March 2021. Look for them at your local library or bookstore!

NONFICTION

Barker, Dedria Humphries. *Mother of Orphans: The True and Curious Story of Irish Alice, A Colored Man's Widow*. 2LeafPress/The University of Chicago Press (Chicago, IL) 2020. PB \$18.99. *Mother of Orphans* is the compelling true story of Alice, an Irish-American woman who defied rigid social structures to form a family with a black man in Ohio in 1899. Alice and her husband had three children together, but after his death in 1912, Alice mysteriously surrendered her children to an orphanage. One hundred years later, her great-grand daughter, Dedria Humphries Barker, went in search of the reasons behind this mysterious abandonment, hoping in the process to resolve aspects of her own conflicts with American racial segregation and conflict. This book is the fruit of Barker's quest. In it, she turns to memoir, biography, historical research, and photographs to unearth the fascinating history of a multiracial community in the Ohio River Valley during the early twentieth century. Barker tells this story from multiple vantage points, frequently switching among points of view to construct a fragmented and comprehensive perspective of the past intercut with glimpses of the present. The result is a haunting, introspective meditation on race and family ties. Part personal

journey, part cultural biography, *Mother of Orphans* examines a little-known piece of this country's past: interracial families that survived and prevailed despite Jim Crow laws, including those prohibiting mixed-race marriage. In lyrical, evocative prose, this extraordinary book ultimately leaves us hopeful about the world as our children might see it.

Brigley, Zoë. *Notes from a Swing State*. Parthian Books (Cardigan, Wales, UK) 2020. PB \$11.99. A timely meditation on America. These creative nonfiction and craft essays cover the possibilities of girls and girlhood, motherhood, violence at home and abroad, violence against women, the consolation in writing, trauma, and redemption. Other topics covered include the writer's English family, Halloween in America, and guns. The essays often use popular and literary culture as jumping off points: for example, Alun Lewis' love letters, the film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, David Bowie, or John Burnside's writings about his abusive father.

Cohan, Deborah J. *Welcome to Wherever We Are: A Memoir of Family, Caregiving, and Redemption*. Rutgers University Press (New Brunswick, NJ) 2020. HC \$26.95. How do you go about caregiving for an ill and elderly parent with a lifelong history of abuse and control, intertwined with expressions of intense love and adoration? How do you reconcile the resulting ambivalence, fear, and anger? *Welcome to Wherever We Are* is a meditation on what we hold onto,

what we let go of, how we remember others, and ultimately how we're remembered. Cohan shares her story of caring for her father, a man who was simultaneously loud, gentle, loving, and cruel, and whose brilliant career as an advertising executive included creating slogans such as "Hey, how 'bout a nice Hawaiian punch?" Wrestling with emotional extremes that characterize abusive relationships, Cohan shows how she navigated life with a man who was at once generous and affectionate, creating magical coat pockets filled with chocolate kisses when she was a little girl, yet who was also prone to searing, vicious remarks like, "You'd make my life easier if you'd commit suicide." In this gripping memoir, Cohan tells her unique personal story while also weaving in her expertise as a sociologist and domestic abuse counselor to address broader questions related to marriage, violence, divorce, only children, intimacy, and loss.

Grace, Kevin. *Cincinnati's Literary Heritage: A History for Booklovers*. The History Press (Charleston, SC) 2021. PB \$21.99. Since its founding in 1788, Cincinnati has treasured books and reading. While the early settlers swapped books with one another, by the early 1800s, civic leaders were envisioning the creation of a public library; in 1814, the Circulating Library Society was founded. Other libraries followed, as did bookshops and stationers. Soon, printing and publishing made Cincinnati one of America's centers for the book trade. Ault & Wiborg became one of the world's largest manufacturers of printing ink. The Strobridge

Lithography Company produced the lion's share of circus and show posters in the Western world. Embracing a city that has welcomed poets and playwrights, authors and booksellers—including a mobile book bus that can pop up anywhere—author Kevin Grace explores the rich heritage of reading and books in Cincinnati.

Green, Carrie. *Studies of Familiar Birds*. Able Muse Press (San Jose, CA) 2020. PB \$19.95.

Carrie Green's *Studies of Familiar Birds* reflects upon the series of nest-and-egg illustrations that Ohioan Virginia Jones saw to completion after her daughter, who had begun the project, died. The artist's loss in the late nineteenth century is presented in tandem with the poet's artistic response to the death of her own father. Other poems draw inspiration from altered vintage photographs in Sara Angelucci's *Aviary* series, or from firsthand observations of birds and humans. This collection, unique in subject and sensibility, is a special honoree of the 2019 Able Muse Book Award.

Hines, Bob. *Amazing Ashville: The Most Colorful City in the World*.

Reedy Press (St. Louis, MO) 2020. PB \$20.95.

In the heart of the Buckeye State, nestled in the Teays Valley, lies one of the most colorful rural communities in the United States. In *Amazing Ashville*, you'll find a guide to all the weird and wonderful aspects of this Ohio community unlike any other, just waiting for you to unearth its uncounted mysteries. Visit one of the best free museums in the country, Ohio's Small Town Museum, and learn the story behind its plaque proclaiming its own self-reliance. Hear countless tales

of small town lore, like the rooster that paid for his own meals, the egg laid by an artistic goose, or the strange story of the Abominable Snowman. The town may only boast a population of a few thousand these days, but they pull out all the stops each year for the Fourth of July—even attracting national media attention. Local author Bob Hines takes you on a fascinating tour of the town he's proud to call home. It may be home to the first traffic light, but with *Amazing Ashville* to lead you, you'll want to stop by for much longer than it takes the light to change.

Israel, Carly. *Seconds and Inches*.

Jaded Ibis Press (San Diego, CA) 2020. PB \$17.99.

A child of alcoholics and grandchild of Holocaust survivors, Carly Israel struggles to conceal her addictions and self-hatred—a path that can only end in death or sobriety. She embarks on a journey of healing, but faces a new set of challenges when her youngest child develops life-threatening medical issues. With grace and love, she faces obstacles head-on, and along the way, she thanks friends, family members, bullies, and unkind strangers.

Lipton, Jacqueline D. *Law and Authors: A Legal Handbook for Writers*. University of California Press (Berkeley, CA) 2020.

PB \$22.95.

This accessible, reader-friendly handbook will be an invaluable resource for authors, agents, and editors in navigating the legal landscape of the contemporary publishing industry. Drawing on a wealth of experience in legal scholarship and publishing, Jacqueline D. Lipton provides a useful legal guide for writers

whatever their levels of expertise or categories of work (fiction, nonfiction, or academic). Through case studies and hypothetical examples, *Law and Authors* addresses issues of copyright law, including explanations of fair use and the public domain; trademark and branding concerns for those embarking on a publishing career; laws that impact the ways that authors might use social media and marketing promotions; and privacy and defamation questions that writers may face. Although the book focuses on American law, it highlights key areas where laws in other countries differ from those in the United States. *Law and Authors* will prepare every writer for the inevitable and the unexpected.

Melina, Lois Muskai. *The Grammar of Untold Stories*. Shanti Arts (Brunswick, ME) 2020. PB \$16.95.

Sixteen essays—ranging from lyric essays to narrative journalism—address how we make sense of what we cannot know, how we make change in the world, how we heal, and how we know when we are home. Collectively, these essays convey the longing for agency and connection, particularly among women. They will resonate with readers of all ages, but perhaps especially with women in the second half of life, those dealing with aging parents, retirement, illness, and accompanying vulnerabilities. Here readers will find comfort within keen reflection upon life's ambiguities.

Miller, Adrienne. *In the Land of Men*. Ecco (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$28.99.

A naive and idealistic twenty-two-year-old from the Midwest, Adrienne Miller got her lucky break when she was hired as an editorial

assistant at *GQ* magazine in the mid-nineties. Even if its sensibilities were manifestly mid-century—the martinis, powerful male egos, and unquestioned authority of kings—*GQ* still seemed the red-hot center of the literary world. It was there that Miller began learning how to survive in a man’s world. Three years later, she forged her own path, becoming the first woman to take on the role of literary editor of *Esquire*, home to the male writers who had defined manhood itself—Hemingway, Mailer, and Carver. Up against this old world, she would soon discover that it wanted nothing to do with a “mere girl.” But this was also a unique moment in history that saw the rise of a new literary movement, as exemplified by *McSweeney’s* and the work of David Foster Wallace. A decade older than Miller, the mercurial Wallace would become the defining voice of a generation and the fiction writer she would work with most. He was her closest friend, confidant—and antagonist. Their intellectual and artistic exchange grew into a highly charged professional and personal relationship between the most prominent male writer of the era and a young woman still finding her voice.

Miller, Shannon Shelton, ed. *The Dayton Anthology*. Belt Publishing (Cleveland, OH) 2020. PB \$20. *The Dayton Anthology*, the fifteenth in Belt’s City Anthologies series, is a snapshot of a city as it recovers from the twin 2019 crises of devastating tornadoes and the mass shooting that took the lives of nine residents. Through essays and poems, contributors reflect on these traumas and the longer-term ills of disinvestment and decay that have plagued the city for years, as well as

on the resilience of the people who call Dayton home. This is the city that brought the world the Wright brothers’ invention of flight, along with the cash register, the hydraulic pump, and other technological innovations, as well as the soaring poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar and the comedy of Dave Chappelle. With contributions from Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley and former Ohio Governor Bob Taft.

Mould, David. *Postcards from the Borderlands*. Open Books (St. Louis, MO) 2020. PB \$21.95.

What are borders? Are they simply political and geographical, marked by posts, walls, and fences, or should we think of them more broadly? In his third book on travel, history, and culture, college professor, historian, and journalist David Mould rambles through a dozen countries in Asia and southern Africa by car, bus, train, shared taxi, and ferry, exploring what borders mean to their peoples.

Nezhukumatathil, Aimee. *World of Wonders: In Praise of Fireflies, Whale Sharks, and Other Astonishments*. Milkweed (Minneapolis, MN) 2020. HC \$25. From beloved, award-winning poet Aimee Nezhukumatathil comes a debut work of nonfiction—a collection of essays about the natural world and the way its inhabitants can teach, support, and inspire us. As a child, Nezhukumatathil called many places home: the grounds of a Kansas mental institution, where her Filipina mother was a doctor; the open skies and tall mountains of Arizona, where she hiked with her Indian father; and the chillier climes of western New York and Ohio. But no matter where she was transplanted—no matter how

awkward the fit or forbidding the landscape—she was able to turn to our world’s fierce and funny creatures for guidance. “What the peacock can do,” she tells us, “is remind you of a home you will run away from and run back to all your life.” The axolotl teaches us to smile, even in the face of unkindness; the touch-me-not plant shows us how to shake off unwanted advances; the narwhal demonstrates how to survive in hostile environments. Even in the strange and the unlovely, Nezhukumatathil finds beauty and kinship. For it is this way with wonder: it requires that we are curious enough to look past the distractions in order to fully appreciate the world’s gifts. Warm, lyrical, and gorgeously illustrated by Fumi Nakamura, *World of Wonders* is a book of sustenance and joy.

Rice, Daniel, and Brian Zimmerman. *A Naturalist’s Guide to the Fishes of Ohio*. Ohio Biological Survey (Columbus, OH) 2020. PB \$30.

A Naturalist’s Guide to the Fishes of Ohio represents the first comprehensive treatment of Ohio’s fish species since M. B. Trautman’s 1981 revision of *The Fishes of Ohio*. Illustrated with beautiful full-color photographs, this guide presents detailed information for 187 species of native and non-native fish, including recent introductions and several extinct or extirpated species. Each account offers field identification notes, population trends, spawning habits, the best sites to encounter each species, and distribution maps showing current and historical collection records. Easy-to-read graphics indicate each species’ habitat preference and vulnerability to extirpation, and the engaging, informative descriptions provide interesting facts and useful

cultural and historical context. This book will be a valuable addition to the library of anyone interested in the natural history of the Midwest, and in learning more about Ohio's diverse, colorful, and unusual aquatic wildlife.

Smith, Maggie. *Keep Moving: Notes on Loss, Creativity, and Change*. Atria (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$24. When Maggie Smith, the award-winning author of the viral poem "Good Bones," started writing inspirational daily Twitter posts in the wake of her divorce, they unexpectedly caught fire. In this deeply moving book of quotes and essays, Smith writes about new beginnings as opportunities for transformation. Like *kintsugi*, the Japanese art of mending broken ceramics with gold, *Keep Moving* celebrates the beauty and strength on the other side of loss. This is a book for anyone who has gone through a difficult time and is wondering: What comes next?

Testa, D. M. *Defending the Dillinger Gang: Jessie Levy and Bess Robbins in the Courtroom*. Exposit Books (Jefferson, NC) 2020. PB \$25. In the early 1930s women practicing criminal law were often held in the same low regard as the clients they served. When a corrupt prosecutor was determined to send as many of the notorious John Dillinger gang to death row as possible, female attorneys Jessie Levy and Bess Robbins rose to the challenge. They skillfully represented six of the gang members, a number far greater than any of their male counterparts. And yet, their story of deals gone bad, wrongful convictions, and success against the odds has all but vanished from history. The recent discovery of interviews,

personal correspondence, and court transcripts—a treasure trove untouched for over eighty years—forms the basis for this book, which traces the careers of Jessie Levy, Bess Robbins, and the John Dillinger gang in detail for the first time.

FICTION

Betts, Matt. *Red Gear 9 (Odd Men Out #2)*. Dog Star Books (Lancaster, PA) 2021. PB \$16.95. A daring prison break at Alcatraz Island sets Reeves, a former Confederate spy, on a path that can either lead him to freedom or back into war. As he and his fellow escapees struggle to make their way in a frightening new world full of airships, truces, and hordes of living dead, he finds the Office of Military Operations doggedly pursuing them. Reeves manages to stay just ahead of his pursuers thanks to his training, determination, and blind luck. *Red Gear 9* picks up mere months after the events of the first book, *Odd Men Out*. The airship Polk is still flying, and the OMO is still determined to keep the peace along the West Coast of the United States. Three of their best officers, Cyrus, Bethy, and Lucinda, race to stop the convicts before the criminals either disappear into the vast reaches of the two Americas, or they decide to burn everything down.

Borgen, Seth. *If I Die in Ohio*. New American Press (Milwaukee, WI) 2019. PB \$14.95. The stories in *If I Die in Ohio* are, as the title suggests, about desire and its bedfellow, regret. Seth Borgen's gift is his ability to deliver surprise, both through his impressive range of premises—from a restless young

man who falls for his ice sculptor neighbor to a religious woman discovering the pleasures of sex and smoking pot—and through the depth and nuance with which he taps emotion.

Boyd, Daniel. *The Devil and Streak Wilson*. Montag Press (San Francisco, CA) 2020. PB \$15.95. The kid they called Streak Wilson had a way with a gun, and he was tired of being treated like a boy. The Devil didn't seem like a bad sort, and he offered a deal for Streak to live his dreams without losing his soul. With more money than he could spend in a lifetime, Streak Wilson found himself framed as a horse thief, chased by bounty hunters, hounded by the Devil . . . And headed for a showdown with the deadliest killer in the territory.

Credico, Michael. *Heartland Calamitous*. Autumn House Press (Pittsburgh, PA) 2020. PB \$17.95. Emerging from deep in America's hinterland, Michael Credico's flash fiction portrays an absurdist, exaggerated, and bizarre vision of the Midwest known as the heartland. The stories are clipped views into a land filled with slippery confusion and chaos, mythical creatures, zombies, comic violence, shapeshifters, and startling quantities of fish. The characters of *Heartland Calamitous* are trying to sort out where, who, and what they are and how to fit into their communities and families.

Ellis, Mary. *One for the Road*. Severn House (London, England, UK) 2021. HC \$28.99. Travel writer Jill Curtis loves her job, but she desperately needs a break if she's to achieve her dream of becoming an investigative reporter.

Sent to Kentucky by her boss to find out why thousands of tourists flock to Bourbon Country every year, Jill's dream seems to be slipping further away. After all, nothing interesting ever happens in small town America . . . does it? As she stays at an estranged relative's B&B, Jill's plan to uncover what makes the state's bourbon tours so popular goes awry when she trips over a body at one of the distilleries and quickly becomes a suspect in a brutal murder. Can she navigate high-stakes bourbon rivalries, centuries-old family feuds, and ill-fated romance to catch a killer and finally land the promotion she craves?

McKittrick, Stacy. *Finding the Perfect Mate (Bitten by Love, Book 6)*. Mythical Press (Dayton, OH) 2020. PB \$13.99.

When Perry pledges abstinence until he meets a Perfect Mate—a rare mortal perfect for a vampire—he doesn't expect to be tested. Especially by another vampire. But Mandy smells like heaven. Has a sexy British accent. And is the smartest person he's met. She's just so . . . perfect. If he holds on to his fantasy, will he lose his chance at love? Mandy hasn't seen her father in 500 years, but when he goes missing, she drops everything and heads for the States, only to discover that Russian vampires kidnapped him. She insists on being involved in his rescue and suggests she and Perry—who's sexy as sin and makes her laugh—infiltrate as lovers. As they pretend, she realizes he's just so . . . perfect. But she's got a secret that will mean her death. Can she trust him not to turn her over to the authorities or does she keep mum and let him go?

Nesbit, TaraShea. *Beheld*. Bloomsbury (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$28.

Ten years after the Mayflower pilgrims arrived on rocky, unfamiliar soil, Plymouth is not the land its residents had imagined. Seemingly established on a dream of religious freedom, in reality the town is led by fervent Puritans who prohibit the residents from living, trading, and worshipping as they choose. By the time an unfamiliar ship, bearing new colonists, appears on the horizon one summer morning, Anglican outsiders have had enough. *Beheld* is about a murder and a trial, and the motivations—personal and political—that cause people to act in unsavory ways. It is also an intimate portrait of love, motherhood, and friendship that asks: Whose stories get told over time, who gets believed—and subsequently, who gets punished?

Sapp, Gregg. *Upside Down Independence Day (Holidazed #3)*. Evolved Publishing (Butler, WI) 2020. PB \$14.95.

Neighboring small towns Coon Creek and Golden Springs, Ohio, enter their own little war and may never be the same after the coming Fourth of July celebration. Coon Creek, a conservative, industrial, blue-collar town, has seen better days. Golden Springs is home to Antaeus College, a private institution with a tradition of liberal politics. No love lost between those two. Mazie Tuttle, a professional dog walker, knows both towns well. Born and raised in Coon Creek, she enrolls in the Antaeus College summer literary program being taught by the famous radical novelist and pie lover, Roscoe Alolo. As tensions flare between the two towns over a statue of Coon Creek's founding father

standing in the town's square, one act of vandalism follows another, and Mazie increasingly feels caught in the middle of the hostilities. Groups in both towns plot to disrupt the other's Fourth of July celebration. On one side, the schemers include Mazie's brother, her ex-boyfriend turned drug dealer, and a Methodist minister who's running for mayor. On the other, Professor Alolo urges his class to take action to "liberate" Coon Creekers. Sooner or later, Mazie will have to take a side. She just doesn't know which she'll choose.

POETRY

Abbott, Steve, ed. *Common Threads 2020*. Ohio Poetry Association (Mansfield, OH) 2020. PB \$10. Published annually and edited by Steve Abbott, *Common Threads* is an OPA members-only journal and is one of the privileges of membership. The journal features poetry of OPA members and contest winners, such as those who win the Ides of March and Ohio High School Poetry contests.

Black, Ali. *If It Heals At All*. Jacar Press (Durham, NC) 2020. PB \$16. This collection is searing poetry that will not allow us to forget the unknown grief buried inside of boundless pleasure. *If It Heals At All* traces the slim boundaries between life and death, blundered justice, and the boldness of Black love reimagined.

Brigley, Zoë. *Hand & Skull*. Bloodaxe Books (Northumberland, England, UK) 2019. PB \$10.99. Brigley's third collection, *Hand & Skull*, draws on early memories

of the Welsh landscape and the harshness of rural life, as well as her later immersion in the American landscape and her perception of a sense of hollowness in particular communities there. Other strands include the horror of violence, especially towards women, contrasted with poems which offer comfort by working as beatitudes or commentaries on life as it exists now, seeking a way of being that is more beautiful, often in relation to her children.

Chan, Marianne. *All Heathens*. Sarabande Books (Louisville, KY) 2020. PB \$14.95.

All Heathens is a declaration of ownership—of bodies, of histories, of time. Revisiting Magellan’s voyage around the world, Marianne Chan navigates her Filipino heritage by grappling with notions of diaspora, circumnavigation, and discovery. Whether rewriting the origin story of Eve (“I always imagined that the serpent had the legs of a seductive woman in black nylons”), or ruminating on what-should-have-been-said “when the man at the party said he wanted to own a Filipino,” Chan paints wry, witty renderings of anecdotal and folkloric histories, while both preserving and unveiling a self that dares any other to try and claim it.

Diemont, Deborah. *The Charmed House*. Dos Madres (Loveland, OH) 2020. PB \$18.

Deborah Diemont’s third collection, *The Charmed House*, in which diverse forms—villanelle, triolet, blank verse, nonce forms, and prose poems—look at the meaning of home, as structure and metaphor. With meditations on twentieth-century paintings by Rufino Tamayo; pre-Columbian sites; Victorian houses in

contemporary U.S. neighborhoods; and U.S. and expatriate culture, the book considers relationships between the personal and communal, and of history to the present moment. It aims to provide pleasure to the reader with sound and sense, color and rhyme, imagery and music.

Garrison, David Lee. *Light in the River*. Dos Madres (Loveland, OH) 2020. PB \$18.

In accessible poems that are much like stories, David Lee Garrison finds ambiguity and mystery beneath the surface of everyday experience. He rewrites the biblical creation myth, positing Dog before Man; he imagines John Keats as a baseball player; he watches children play hide-and-seek and rejoice in finding and being found; he ponders the epitaphs in an old graveyard; and, he remembers a singer who came in one measure too early on the Hallelujah Chorus. The poet envisions life as a meandering journey through a summer afternoon by the river—humid and intense, with revelation everywhere, like leaves and shadows on the water.

Grandbois, Peter, James McCorkle, and Robert Miltner. *Triptych*. Etruscan Press (Wilkes-Barre, PA) 2020. PB \$18.

Between two covers are three books, *The Three-Legged World* by Peter Grandbois, *In Time* by James McCorkle, and *Orpheus & Echo* by Robert Miltner. Of course, books converse with other books, and poetry, rippling from unmeasured sound into rampant forms, is especially polyphonic. Etruscan brings these three books together because they exerted upon our editors a gravitational pull, causing the shadow of one to fall across the

reading of another. Sufficient on their own, these books achieve new altitudes when aligned.

Malone, Charles. *Working Hypothesis*. Finishing Line Press (Georgetown, KY) 2020. PB \$19.99. A generous skepticism about the nature of knowledge, paired with an abiding care about nature itself, undergirds Malone’s frank, witty, and deeply searching *Working Hypothesis*. Child of scientists, witness to the many ways in which knowledge so often becomes a means of hiding from the world rather than its means of revelation, Malone writes poems that take upon themselves an ancient command, *to know thyself*, understanding all the while, that such an ideal might not exist. Science and reason cannot save us from our situation—not only the impending doom of climate crisis, but the more quietly troubled fates of our personal lives. But Malone also trusts that knowledge begins in wonder, and if one can learn to undermine our self-seriousness with serious play, we might move beyond the facts into more startlingly realized realms.

Martinelli, Louis. *Dreaming with Open Eyes: Poems for Vincent Van Gogh*. Up on Big Rock Poetry Series (Rushford, MN) 2020. PB \$16.95. This poetry collection explores the life and art of Vincent Van Gogh. Louis Martinelli’s grand performance in language guides us through the psyche of Van Gogh—surrounds his sorrow, illuminates his achievement, exalts in the ecstasy of painting he gave the world.

Moore, Miles David. *Man on Terrace with Wine*. Kelsay Books (American Fork, UT) 2020. PB \$18.50.

Miles David Moore is back with his best book of poetry yet. *Man on Terrace with Wine* is a dark but always hopeful carnival that juggles both sonnet and emoticon with the ease of a poet who has been at it for a long time. This is life in the center ring, with all the tenderness and sting that comes along with it, from Godzilla in 3D to a lonely ride on an intercity bus, from Elvis in heaven to Hitler in hell. You may not know whether to laugh or cry, but that's precisely the point. Miles Moore is a master, and *Man on Terrace* will stay with you long after the show is over.

Paino, Frank. *Obscura*. Orison Books (Asheville, NC) 2020. PB \$16.

In his long-anticipated third poetry collection, Frank Paino sheds his singular light on the most obscure corners of history and human nature, assembling a hagiography of unorthodox saints. Paino's poems teach us to look deeply at the unsettling realities from which we instinctually look away—and they show us the rich rewards of beauty and wisdom we can gain by doing so.

MIDDLE GRADE & YOUNG ADULT

Boyce, Kristy. *Hot British Boyfriend*. HarperTeen (New York, NY) 2021. PB \$11.99.

After a horrifying public rejection by her crush, Ellie Nichols does what any girl would do: she flees the country. To be more precise, she joins her high school's study abroad trip to England. While most of her classmates are there to take

honors courses and pad their college applications, Ellie is on a quest to rebuild her reputation and self-confidence. And nothing is more of a confidence booster than getting a hot British boyfriend. When Ellie meets Will, a gorgeous and charming Brit, she vows to avoid making the same mistakes she did with the last guy she liked. Which is why she strikes up a bargain with Dev, an overachieving classmate whom she's never clicked with, but who does seem to know a lot about the things Will is interested in: If he helps her win over her crush, then she'll help him win over his. But even as Ellie embarks on a whirlwind romance, she still needs to figure out if this is actually the answer to all her problems . . . and whether the perfect boyfriend is actually the perfect boy for her.

Prosek, Bryan. *The Brighter the Stars*. Camcat Books (Brentwood, TN) 2020. HC \$24.95.

Jake Saunders became a Legion soldier to honor the memory of his war hero uncle, who was brutally murdered in front of him when he was still a young teen. Fast forward a few years, and Jake and his best friend Cal have been tasked with escorting Cal's older sister, Diane, to become Earth's ambassador on a far-off planet. It's the opportunity of Diane's career, very likely a lifetime post. But for Jake, that could mean a lifetime's heartbreak. He has loved Diane since they were kids, and every step closer to that ambassador assignment is a step closer to goodbye. But somebody is after more than Earth's defense, and Jake, Cal, and Diane are on a trajectory to crash headlong into that dangerous plot. Somebody wants to play Earth against its most immediate threat, Craton, and convince both to develop

super weapons—and he's working with the person who killed Jake's uncle all those years ago. When he reappears on Jake, Cal, and Diane's journey to the ambassadorship, Jake is faced with difficult choices to look out for his friends and honor his uncle's memory.

Romasco-Moore, Maria. *Some Kind of Animal*. Delacorte Press (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$18.99.

Jo lives in the same Appalachian town where her mother disappeared fifteen years ago. Everyone knows what happened to Jo's mom. She was wild, and bad things happen to girls like that. Now people are starting to talk about Jo. She's barely passing her classes and falls asleep at her desk every day. She's following in her mom's footsteps. Jo does have a secret. It's not what people think, though. Not a boy or a drug habit. Jo has a twin sister. Jo's sister is not like most people. She lives in the woods—catches rabbits with her bare hands and eats them raw. Night after night, Jo slips out of her bedroom window and meets her sister in the trees. And together they run, fearlessly. The thing is, no one's ever seen Jo's sister. So when her twin attacks a boy from town, everyone assumes that it was Jo. Which means Jo has to decide—does she tell the world about her sister, or does she run?

JUVENILE

Aldama, Frederick Luis. Illus. by Chris Escobar. *The Adventures of Chupacabra Charlie*. The Ohio State University Press (Columbus, OH) 2020. PB \$9.95.

In their debut picture book, Frederick Luis Aldama and Chris Escobar invite young readers along on the adventures of Chupacabra Charlie, a polite, handsome, and unusually tall ten-year-old chupacabra yearning for adventure beyond the edge of los Estados Unidos. Little does Charlie know when he befriends a young human, Lupe, that together, with only some leftover bacon quesadillas and a few cans of Jumex, they might just encounter more adventure than they can handle. Along the way, they meet strange people and terrifying danger, and their bravery will be put to the test. Thankfully, Charlie is a reassuring and winsome companion who never doubts that he and Lupe will return safely home. With magical realism, allegory, and gentle humor, Aldama and Escobar have created a story that will resonate with young and old readers alike as it incorporates folklore into its subtle take on the current humanitarian crisis at the border.

Springstubb, Tricia. Illus. by Elaheh Taherian. *Khalil and Mr. Hagerty and the Backyard Treasures*. Candlewick Press (Somerville, MA) 2020. HC \$16.99.

Khalil lives in the upstairs apartment with his family, which is big, busy, and noisy. Downstairs lives Mr. Hagerty, who is quiet. Khalil and Mr. Hagerty don't appear to have a lot in common, but hot summer days have a way of bringing people together. As Khalil looks for buried treasure in the yard, Mr. Hagerty tends to his garden. Both help each other navigate language—whether it be learning new words or remembering those seemingly forgotten. Before long, an unlikely friendship is born, full of treasure, thoughtfulness, and chocolate cake. Through words and vibrant cut-paper collage, author Tricia Springstubb and illustrator Elaheh Taherian nurture a tribute to the love of good neighbors and to the strength of intergenerational and intercultural bonds.

Thank You!

The Ohioana Library wouldn't be the unique organization it is without our many generous supporters. Listed below are those who have given from December 1, 2020, through February 28, 2021. Special thanks to Governor Mike DeWine and the Ohio General Assembly for the state's ongoing support.

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Margaret Peterson Haddix Supports Ohioana

For most of us, 2020 was the Year of Constant Losses. But for those inclined to look for silver linings, it was also the Year We Were Reminded to Be Grateful.

One prime example: Being forced to do without an in-person Ohioana Book Festival in 2020 (and, unfortunately, again this year) reminded me what an amazing event it is. The weekend in April 2020 when I'd expected to be at OBF, I found myself nostalgically remembering the joys of past festivals: The conversations with other authors from all over the state, where we constantly found ourselves saying, "I know just what you mean!" The dedicated readers who declared, "I've wanted to meet you for so long!" The discovery of random connections, that so-and-so's cousin lives in this or that author's neighborhood, or went to some other author's high school. The kids who came straight from soccer games or tae kwon do or dance practice—proving how well-rounded and talented Ohio's next generation of readers and writers are.

And most of all: the sense of community.

But then, thanks to Ohioana's hard-working, dedicated staff, in August 2020 we were able to have as many of those festival joys as possible in a COVID-restricted, online setting. It wasn't the same, of course, but I still got to converse with other authors; I still got to answer readers' questions. I still got that sense of literary community.

And that is why I support Ohioana: Because we are connected. Because we are responsible for raising the next generation of Ohio readers and writers. Because we are each one of us a bridge between the stories of the past and our dreams for the future.

Because we are a community.



Margaret Peterson Haddix

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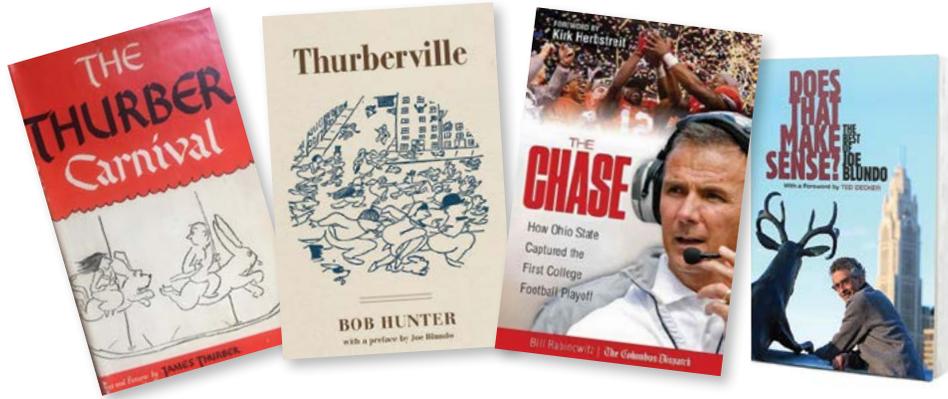
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