

# OHIOana QUARTERLY

SUMMER 2020 | VOL. 63 NO. 3

## The Ohioana Book Festival

COMICS

August 28-30, 2020

Starring James Thurber



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# OHIOana QUARTERLY

SUMMER 2020

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The *Ohioana Quarterly* (ISSN 0030-1248) is currently published four times a year by the Ohioana Library Association, 274 East First Avenue, Suite 300, Columbus, Ohio 43201. Individual subscriptions to the *Ohioana Quarterly* are available through membership in the Association; \$35 of membership dues pays the required subscription. Single copy \$6.50. U.S. postage paid at Columbus, Ohio. Send address changes to Ohioana Quarterly, 274 E. First Ave., Suite 300, Columbus, Ohio, 43201. Copyright © 2020 by the Ohioana Library Association. All rights reserved. Printed by PXPOHIO.

# From the Director



Dear Friends,

*"The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page."*

No one knows for sure the exact source of that quote (it's been attributed to Saint Augustine). Whoever said it, it's a wise and wonderful thought. And perfectly suited to the new Ohio Literary Trail, which we are delighted to introduce herein, for it's all about books AND travel!

We usually associate travel with summer. For the Ohioana Library, summer is when we're catching our breath after the biggest event of the year—the Ohioana Book Festival, which happens the last Saturday of April. We had to postpone the 2020 festival due to the COVID-19 crisis, and our back-up date of August 29 also didn't work out. So, we're "going virtual" with a three-day online festival! You'll read more about it inside, and we'll have many more details to share on our website and social media in the coming weeks. We look forward to having you join us August 28, 29, and 30. We hope it's one of the highlights of your summer!

Which brings us back to the new Ohio Literary Trail, an exciting online program that showcases the Buckeye State as one of the truly great literary centers of our nation. Our special thanks to writer, marketing pro extraordinaire, and Ohioana trustee Betty Weibel for spearheading the tremendous effort it took to make the Ohio Literary Trail a reality. Be sure to check out Betty's story about the trail, starting on page 16.

Of course, summer is the perfect season not only for traveling, but for reading. If you're looking for some great suggestions for your summer reading, take a look inside at the reviews of new books recently added to our collection. And of course, the great books represented by the authors of the Ohioana Book Festival!

The world IS indeed a book. And reading itself is like traveling...a book can take you to places and introduce you to people you might otherwise never have experienced. So from all of us at Ohioana, best wishes for a healthy, happy summer. One we hope is filled with (safe) travel AND books!

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

David Weaver  
Executive Director

## ON THE COVER

This issue's front cover was designed by Kathryn Powers and adapted from the official 2020 Ohioana Book Festival artwork created by artist and illustrator Rafael Rosado. Read the interview with Rafael on page 14.



# The 2020 Ohioana Book Festival: Going Virtual!

by David Weaver

Well, we held out as long as we could!

As you know, the 2020 Ohioana Book Festival was originally scheduled to take place at the Columbus Metropolitan Library's Main Library on April 25. Then came COVID-19. We announced the festival would be postponed until August 29, in the hopes that the crisis would be over or at least significantly contained to the point where it would be safe to meet in large groups once again.

Unfortunately, as you are aware, this has proven to be an unprecedented, and lingering, health crisis. For the safety of everyone—authors, attendees, volunteers, and staff—we finally made the difficult decision that the 2020 Ohioana Book Festival would not be presented as a live event.

And now for the good news...we are excited and happy to tell you the Ohioana Book Festival **WILL** go on—as a virtual event, **AND** that it will cover **THREE** days... August 28, 29, and 30!

We're working out the details, but we can tell you our virtual festival will involve a variety of formats and online platforms. We are also looking into the possibility of recording some things in advance to share before and after the official event as outreach, as we do every year. We're grateful that the Columbus Metropolitan



Meeting authors at the 2019 festival. Photo credit: Mary Rathke.

Library will also still be involved in helping us host and promote the virtual event. And we still plan to have books available for sale, working with our official bookseller, The Book Loft of German Village.

We are exploring a lot of exciting ideas as to what a virtual festival will look like for us, and we'll be sharing those on our website and social media. But we can tell you we expect to have panel discussions, readings, and author conversations.

Obviously this change is not our ideal. We're disappointed that we won't be able to see you in person. However, we are optimistic given the success of our recent virtual programs, as well as a number of book fairs and festivals that have already taken place online, that we can present a fun and dynamic virtual event to celebrate the literature and authors of Ohio in 2020.

Thanks for your patience and understanding during this difficult time. And special thanks to our festival authors, sponsors, and partners who have hung in there with us!

Keep watching our website and social media for details—and mark your calendars to join us August 28, 29, and 30 as the Ohioana Book Festival goes virtual!



A panel discussion at the 2019 festival. Photo credit: Mary Rathke.

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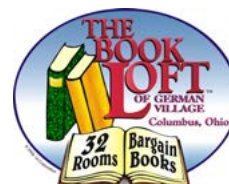


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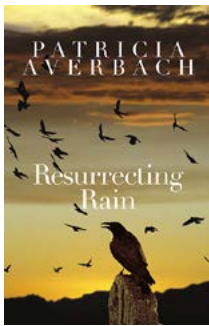
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# Festival Authors

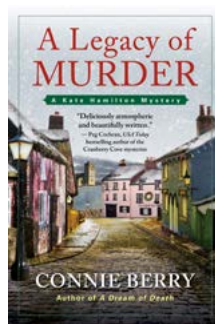
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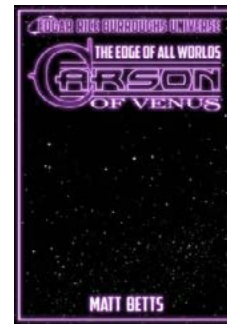
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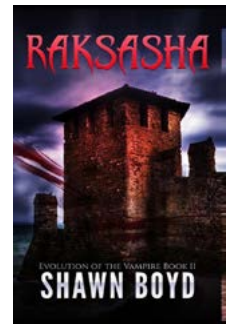
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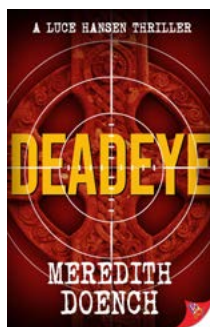
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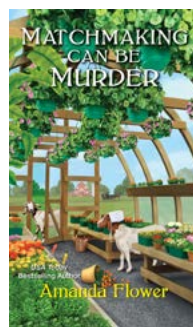
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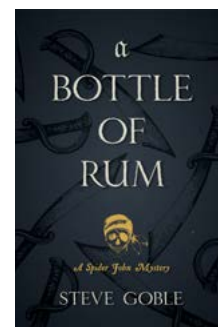
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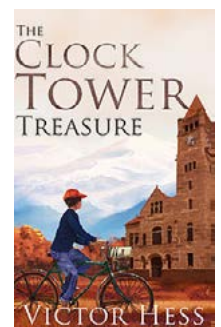
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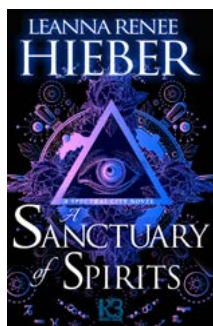
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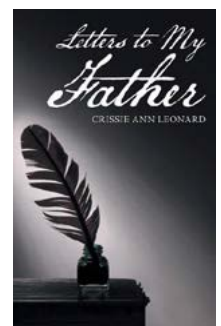
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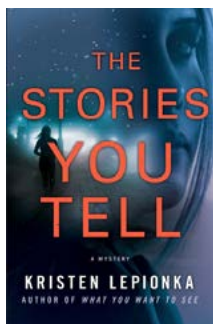
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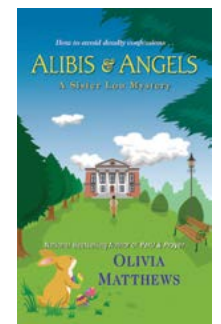
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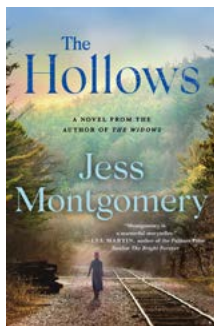


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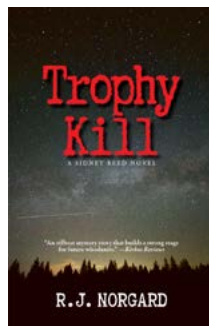




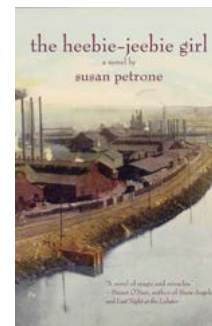
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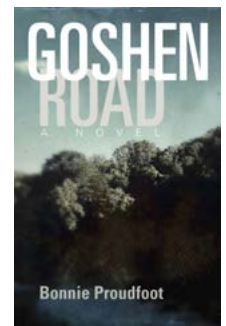
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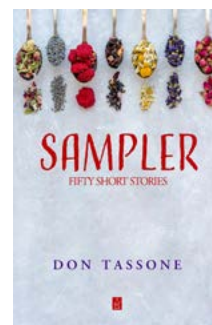
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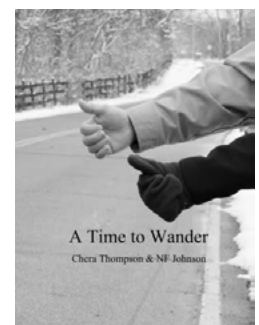
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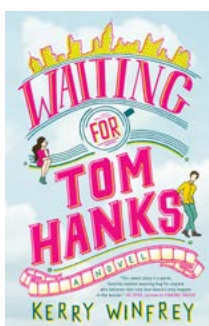
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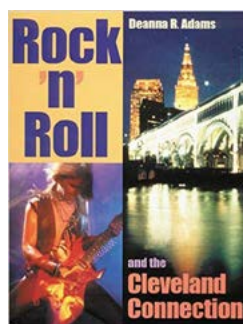


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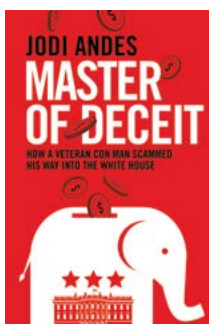


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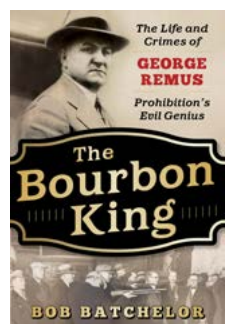
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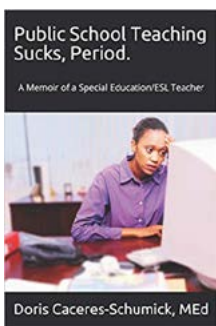
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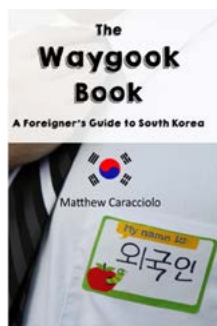
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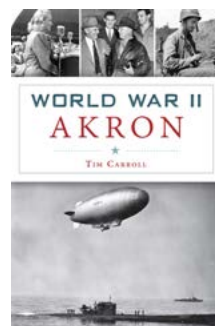
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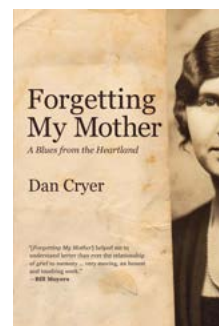
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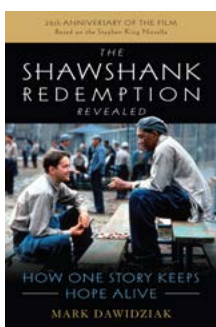
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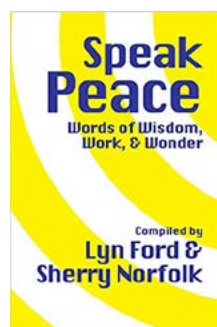
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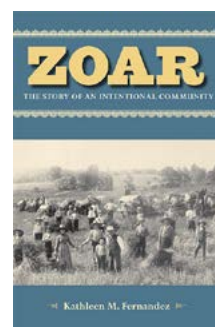
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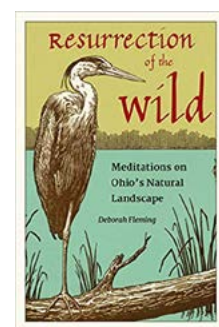
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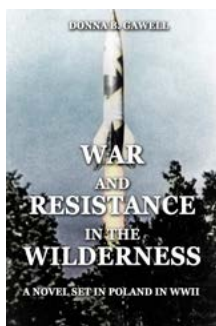
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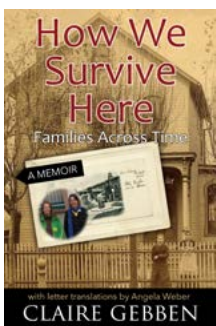
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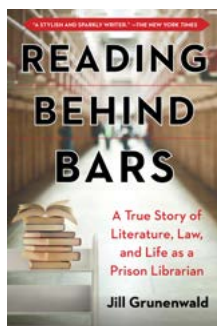
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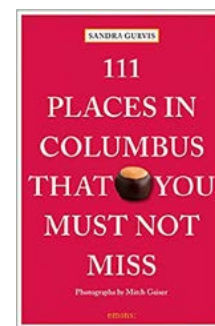
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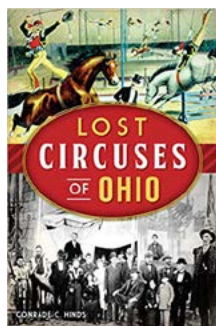
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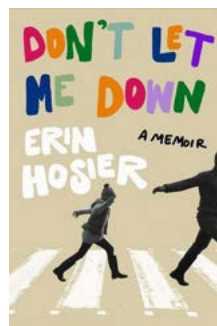
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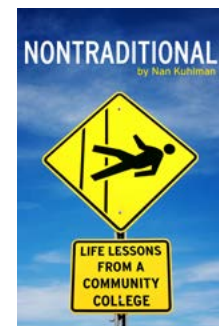
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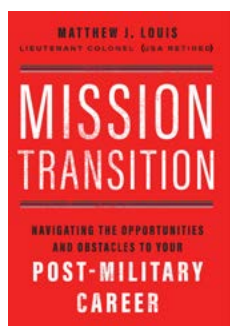


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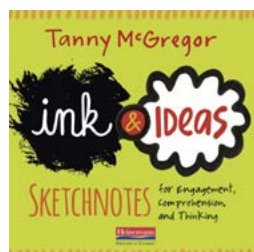


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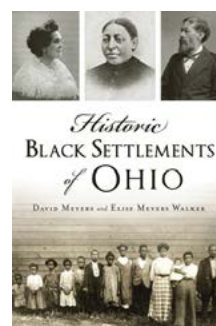
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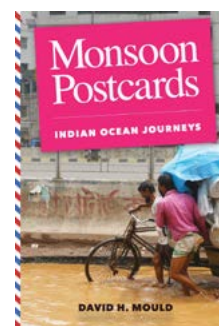
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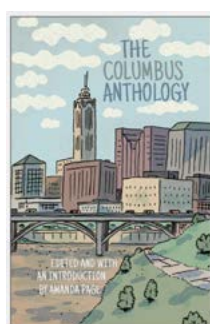
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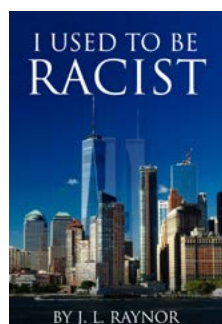
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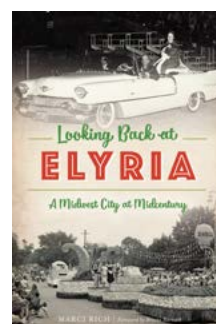
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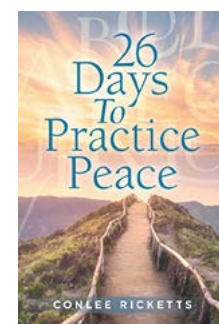
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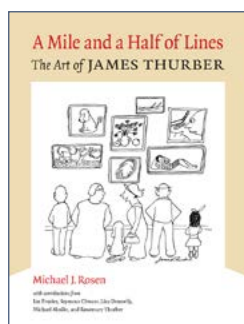
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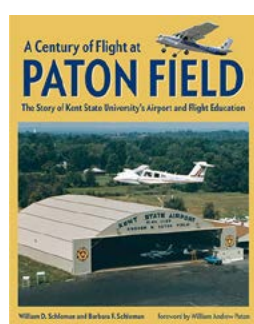
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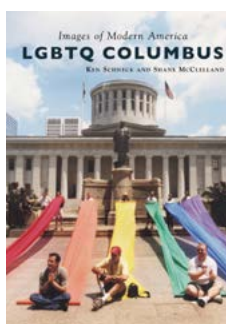
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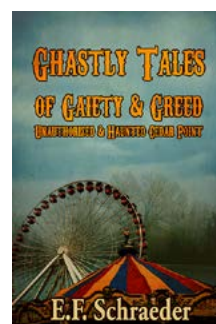
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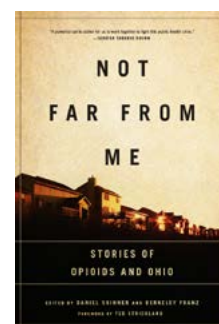
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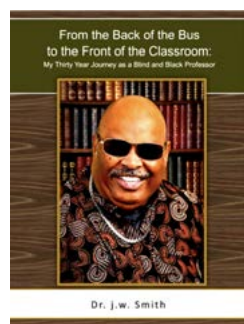
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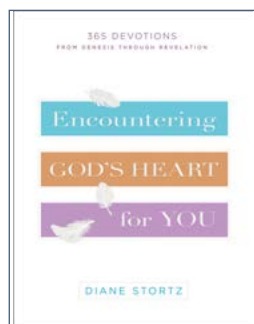
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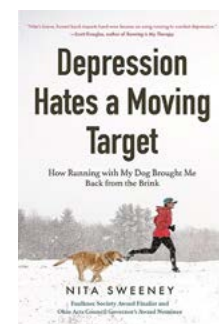
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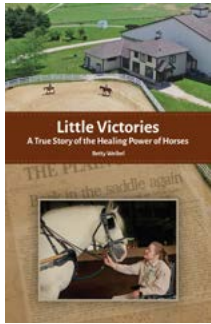
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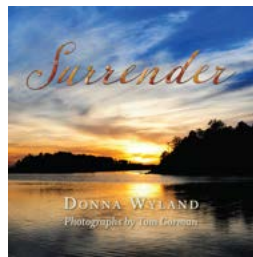
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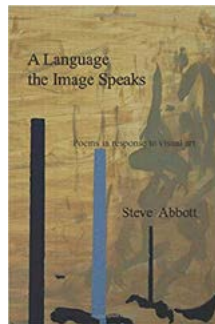


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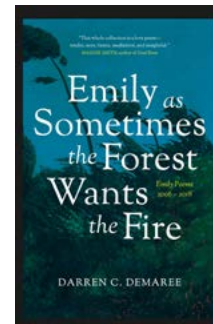


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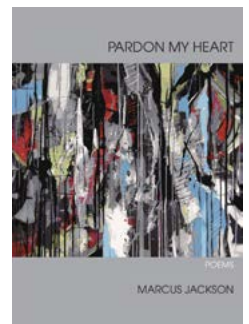
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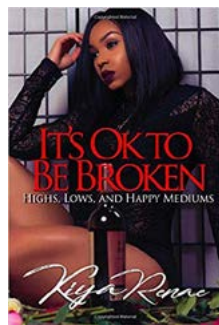
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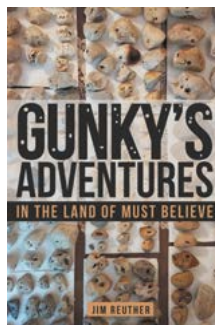
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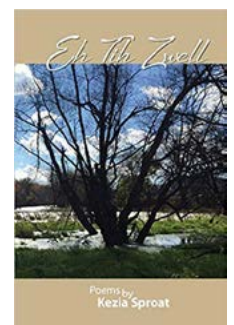
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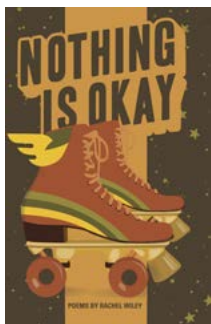


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## YOUNG ADULT & MIDDLE GRADE



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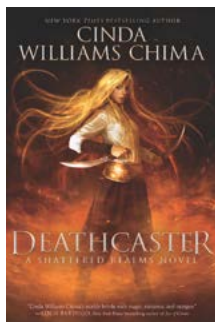
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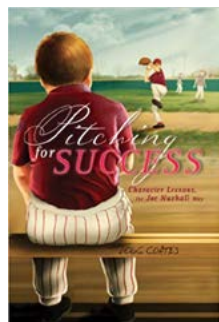
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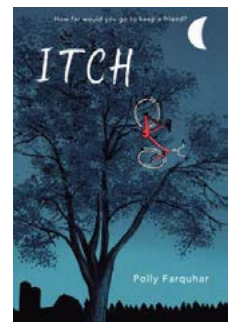
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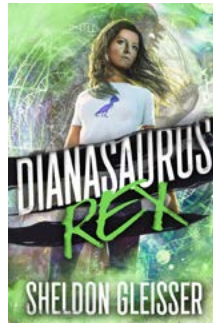




Kimberly Gabriel



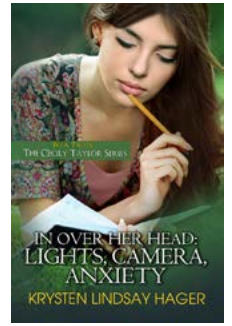
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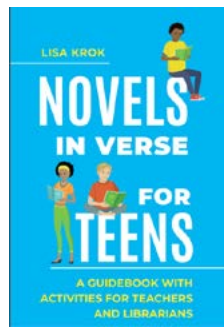
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Bob Hunter



Lisa Krok



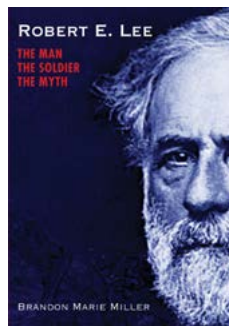
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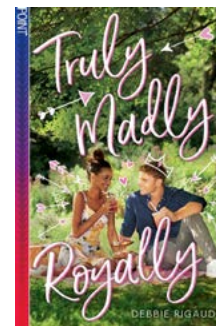
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Brandon Marie  
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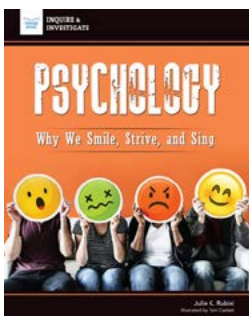
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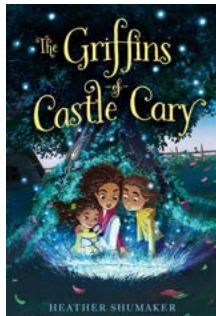
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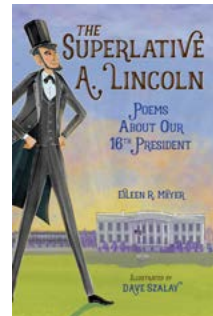
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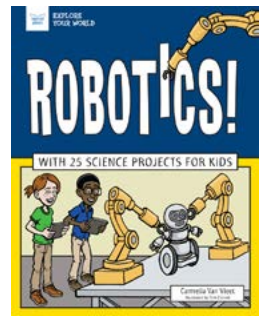
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Dave Szalay

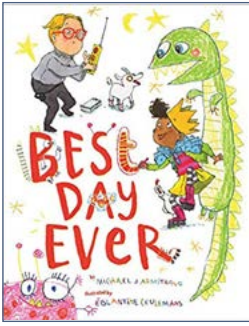


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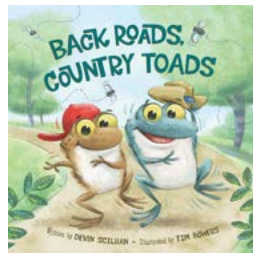


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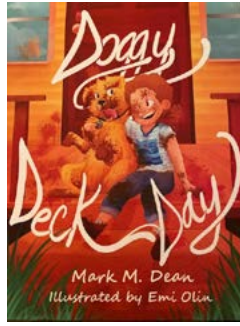
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Tim Bowers



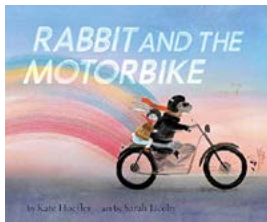
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Steve Doherty &  
Olivia Dybik



Steve Harpster



Kate Hoefler



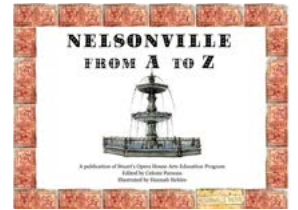
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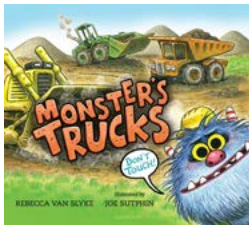
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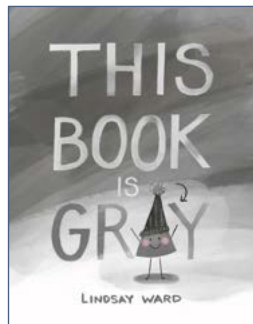
Samuel Narh



Celeste Parsons



Joe Sutphin



Lindsay Ward



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**Learn more about Maggie's story and other Columbus artists, performances, exhibitions, concerts, public art and more at [ColumbusMakesArt.com](http://ColumbusMakesArt.com).**



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# An Interview with Rafael Rosado

by Kathryn Powers



Rafael Rosado

*The 2020 Ohioana Book Festival poster was designed by Ohio writer, illustrator, and storyboard artist Rafael Rosado. Learn about his creative process and latest book below!*

**Q** What was your inspiration behind the design of the book festival poster art?

**A** James Thurber had a very distinct, iconic look, with the round glasses, the unruly hair, the suits... he'd always looked like a cartoon character to me. (Or maybe that's just the way I look at the world!) When I started thinking of ideas for the poster, I knew that it would have to be cartoony somehow. At first they were single images, almost like comic covers. But my ideas always have a way of turning into narratives. Once I settled on the comic strip idea, it came together fairly quickly. I knew I had to take Thurber on some kind of journey, with a big reveal at the end.

**Q** What inspired you to become an illustrator? Was there a specific book, author, or artist that influenced your passion for children's literature?

**A** I've been drawing since I could hold a pencil, and making comics almost as long. There was never any doubt in my mind that I would pursue a career in the arts. If I had to name one artist or writer who's had the biggest influence on me, it would have to be Jack Kirby. He co-created most of the Marvel universe. His art is kinetic, dynamic, and full of invention. His influence might not be apparent in my work, but it's definitely there.

**Q** Can you tell us about your creative process? Do you plan each pen stroke, or do you draw by the seat of your pants?

**A** I always start with lots of very loose, very rough sketches. If it's an illustration, I'll explore different ways to stage and compose the image. If it's comics, I'll start by thumbnailing the whole story first. Thumbnails are very small sketches where you work out the continuity from page to page, figure out the staging, etc. To me, this is where the heavy lifting is done—where I figure out the flow of the story. I'll turn those thumbnails into full-size penciled pages, which I'll then ink traditionally or digitally.

**Q** Can you tell us a little about the title you're bringing to the Ohioana Book Festival?

**A** The Ultra Squad series was developed by Elevate Pictures for Justice Studios. I was brought in to do visual development and illustration on all of the books. It gave me a chance to design some fun characters, like the Pallies, and I liked the girl empowerment theme of the series. Plus, it's fun to draw aliens! I really enjoyed working with the writer, Julia DeVillers. It was her first graphic novel, and she had lots of great ideas. There are four books in the series, and hopefully there will be more.





# The Ohioana Book Festival

COMICS

August 28-30, 2020

Starring James Thurber



# Ohio Literary Trail Launches This Summer

by Betty Weibel

The new Ohio Literary Trail shines a spotlight on Ohio's role in shaping culture and literature worldwide. Designed to increase awareness of Ohio's literary accomplishments and encourage exploration, the Ohioana Library Association compiled a diverse Trail of inspirational landmarks that pay tribute to the authors, poets, illustrators, libraries, and creative influencers of the written word. Tourists planning a literary-themed outing, as well as Ohioans who want to discover literary treasures they never knew existed in their own backyard, will find it here.

The Trail is hosted online by the Ohioana Library Association at [www.ohioana.org](http://www.ohioana.org). The collection of seventy-two landmark destinations and historical markers are displayed on a map outlining Ohio's five geographic regions and eighty-eight counties. Each listing is linked to its website with details and directions, whether you want to plan a few stops or set off on a literary treasure hunt across Ohio.

In southwest Ohio, you might choose to walk in the footsteps of author Harriet Beecher Stowe and poet Paul Laurence Dunbar. A few hours to the east, you can discover the magical Appalachian Trail that attracted explorers like Grandma Gatewood and the writers who penned their stories. In the heart of Ohio, you can visit libraries that hold world-renowned collections of comics and theater history. Did you know northwest Ohio is home to the largest collection of Nancy Drew-themed artifacts from Millie Wirt, who was the original Carolyn Keene ninety years ago? And northeast Ohio was home to Pulitzer Prize-winning author and conservationist Louis Bromfield, whose beautiful Oak Hill Cottage and Malabar Farm (with seasonal gardens) appeal to guests.

## LIBRARIES FOR TOURISTS

The Ohio Literary Trail promotes discovery of the Buckeye State's great literary treasures including nearly two dozen diverse libraries and library markers in every region of Ohio that will enlighten visitors.



Mildred Wirt Benson and her creation, Nancy Drew. Photo credit: Toledo Lucas County Public Library.

Imagine walking into a castle that is filled with books. That's a common comparison visitors make when they discover The Wagnalls Memorial Library in Lithopolis (Central Ohio). The tudor-gothic architecture is reminiscent of the Medieval Revival period built from stones and labor from a local quarry, with stained glass and lovely scenic gardens. Wagnalls Memorial Library is named for the man who founded the famous Funk & Wagnalls dictionary and encyclopedia in the 1800s, who was a Lithopolis native.

His daughter, Mabel, gave the library to the community as a gift in memory of her parents.

Mabel, an author herself, was an avid correspondent with literary and cultural figures, including O. Henry and Harry Houdini, and the correspondence between them is on display, as well as two original Norman Rockwell paintings. Visitors won't need a library card and there is no admission charge, according to Library Director Tami Morehart. "You may want to plan a day for your visit and spend time in Lithopolis with its antique stores, and Wagnalls can be the cornerstone of your visit," she added.

In addition to impressive libraries around Ohio, the Ohio Literary Trail features markers depicting former libraries like the "Western Library Association - Coonskin Library," a stock-owned circulating library



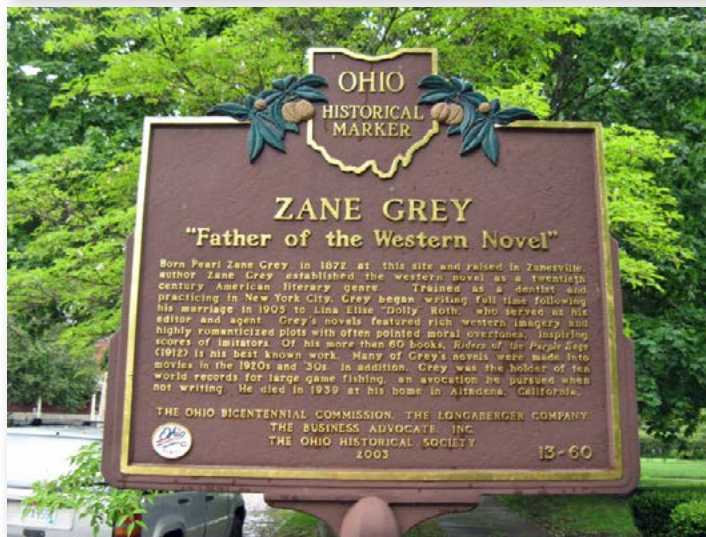
established by citizens in the early 1800s. Since cash was scarce during Ohio's frontier era, some citizens paid for their \$2.50 shares by the sale of animal pelts, including raccoon skins. The result was their investment in fifty-one books on topics ranging from history, religion, travel, and biography—the first accessions for the Western Reserve Library Association.

## FREE STOPS ON THE TRAIL

The Ohio Literary Trail includes fifty-four historical markers dedicated by organizations including the United Libraries Association, Ohio History Connection (formerly known as Ohio Historical Society), and Ohio Bicentennial Commission (OBC). More than half of the literary markers were dedicated as an OBC project revitalizing Ohio's traditional program of honoring important people and events with the placement of permanent historical markers. The state's effort to pay tribute in this way began during the 1953 sesquicentennial.

During Ohio's Bicentennial year itself (2003), a special effort was made to erect historical markers under a themed umbrella to ensure that some of the most important facets of Ohio's history would be included. Targeted markers were erected in each of twenty-one categories, including Literary Ohio, Native Americans, Sports, Veterans, Labor, Business and Industry, and Presidents. In less than a year, more than 200 targeted markers were added to Ohio's historical marker collection through this focused effort. The Bicentennial celebration pushed Ohio's marker tally to over 1,000.

"In communities of every size, citizens supported their local marker dedication and brought attention to the history they honored," said Stephen George, former Executive Director of the Ohio Bicentennial Commission. "For example, in the small town of Mount Gilead, the late author Dawn Powell was honored with a marker. Many people were unaware she grew up in Mount Gilead and went on to become an admired author drawing on her life in small-town Ohio. The same is true in Clyde, where Sherwood Anderson drew from his experiences of his hometown to pen *Winesburg, Ohio*. So many small towns in Ohio produced outstanding writers who changed or shaped our country's culture. Zane Grey, from southeastern Ohio and author of *Riders of the Purple Sage*, popularized the Western novel. So



Top: Library Room at The Wagnalls Memorial Library. Photo credit: The Wagnalls Memorial Library. Middle: Superman display, Reinberger Children's Library Center. Photo credit: Reinberger Children's Library Center. Bottom: Zane Grey Historical Marker. Photo Credit: Ohio History Connection.



Harriet Beecher Stowe House and Historical Marker. Photo credit: Ohio History Connection.

the Bicentennial's Literary Ohio-targeted markers drew attention to the Buckeye State's wide range of contributions to American literary culture."

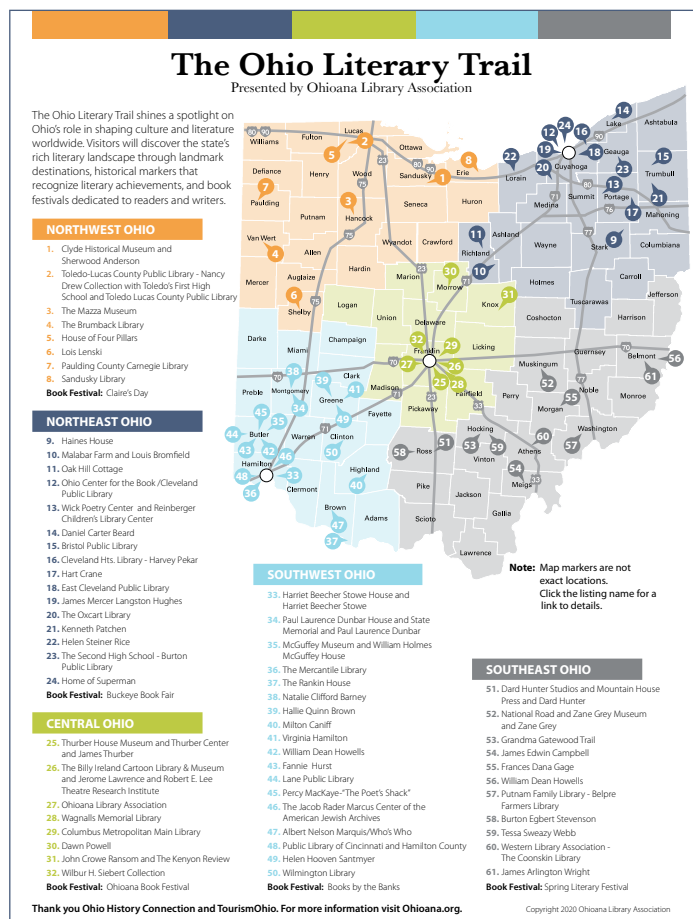
"I don't think any piece of literature has contributed to altering American history more than Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*," George added. "Abraham Lincoln, meeting Mrs. Stowe, said to her 'so you're the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war!'" A marker in Cincinnati at the Harriet Beecher Stowe House pays tribute to the acclaimed author. Visitors can read the marker on the lawn of the historic home or walk the town where Stowe lived and gathered inspiration for her bestseller. They can also see her family's former home which is being refurbished, a project of the Ohio History Connection. "I am proud of the historical marker program and that new audiences will be reintroduced to them today with the launch of the Ohio Literary Trail," George said.

## SOMETHING TO BE PROUD OF

The Ohio Literary Trail celebrates Ohio's diversity through an eclectic range of literary greats who influenced feminism and women's rights, Black history, religion, LGBTQ+ rights, and American culture through literature.

After exploring our rich heritage, it's time to turn your focus on Ohio's current writers and books on Ohio topics. For a true literary celebration that unites readers and writers, the Ohio Literary Trail features five annual festivals in each region of the state: the Ohioana Book Festival in Columbus, Wooster's Buckeye Book Fair, Books by the Banks in Cincinnati, the Athens Spring Literary Festival, and Claire's Day in northwest Ohio. The big events feature authors, illustrators, poets, and more with fun activities for everyone. The link to each festival shares schedule updates.

The entire Ohio Literary Trail is hosted on the Ohioana Library Association website and available to view at [www.ohioana.org](http://www.ohioana.org). There is a downloadable map with links to every destination with details, directions, and background. And as Ohio continues to influence the literary world, the Trail map will continue to be updated with new destinations that invite discovery and inspire the next generation of writers.



The Ohio Literary Trail map, designed by Leslie King.



# Ohio Literary Trail: Celebrating Nancy Drew

by David Weaver

Of the more than sixty sites featured on the Ohio Literary Trail, the newest can be found at the Toledo Lucas County Public Library. It's the Jennifer Fisher/Nancy Drew Collection, a fantastic treasure trove which has been painstakingly installed over the past year and set to open this summer. And just in time, too, as this year marks the 90th birthday of the iconic teen sleuth.

It was 1930 when Nancy made her debut in *The Secret of the Old Clock*. The author, "Carolyn Keene," was actually a pseudonym for the real writer: Mildred "Millie" Wirt, an Iowa-born writer not yet twenty-five years old when she was hired as a ghostwriter by publisher Edward Stratemeyer. The concept was his—but it was Millie who fleshed the character out, and brought teenage protagonist Nancy Drew to life. Millie created a memorable character whose adventures would entertain and inspire several future generations of young women: First Ladies and US Supreme Court Justices, television personalities and entertainers, and, of course, other mystery authors!

Altogether, Millie wrote twenty-three of the first thirty Drew novels. The last, *The Clue of the Velvet Mask*, came out in 1953, by which time she was living in Toledo and married to George Benson, editor of the *Toledo Blade*. Millie herself had a weekly column for the *Toledo Blade* that she kept up for more than fifty years, until she died in 2002 at the age of ninety-six. And although she wrote many other books for young readers, it is for creating Nancy Drew that she is most renowned.

Jennifer Fisher's collection, housed in two rooms, comprises several thousand items, from first editions of Drew books and cover art to merchandise and

collectibles. Just outside the area is a sign naming the collection the Jennifer Fisher/Nancy Drew Collection, and underneath is the Literary Landmark plaque dedicated in 2015 to Mildred Wirt Benson, the original "Carolyn Keene."

Nancy Eames of the Toledo Lucas County Public Library said, "We are pleased and proud to be the new home of

Jennifer Fisher's Nancy Drew Collection. Jenn's goal was to make the collection accessible to as many people as possible and our public library will make that happen. We plan to rotate the collection regularly to both protect and preserve the items, as well as to tell different stories about the history of Nancy Drew and her first author, Mildred Wirt Benson."

Added Fisher, "It was always more than just my Nancy Drew collection. It always had a greater purpose: to inspire,

to educate, and to reach new generations of Nancy Drew readers and fans." The Jennifer Fisher/Nancy Drew Collection will indeed do that. And it will be a fun way to spend an hour or a day while traveling on the new Ohio Literary Trail.

*Special thanks to Jennifer Fisher, for sharing her love of Nancy Drew with fans in Ohio and beyond, and to Nancy Eames and the Toledo Lucas County Public Library.*

To learn more, check out the Toledo Library's guest blog post by Jennifer Fisher: <https://www.toledolibrary.org/blog/curating-a-nancy-drew-collection>. Note: The Toledo Lucas County Public Library is in a phased re-opening due to COVID-19. For current information about library hours and access to the collection, visit [www.toledolibrary.org](http://www.toledolibrary.org).



The Jennifer Fisher/Nancy Drew Collection. Photo Credit: Toledo Lucas County Public Library

# Book Reviews

## NONFICTION

### **Blundo, Joe. *Does That Make Sense? The Best of Joe Blundo*.**

Trillium Press/Ohio State University Press (Columbus, OH)  
2019. PB \$21.95.

“Columbus is inherently funny.”

So says Joe Blundo. Heaven knows we all could use a few laughs in these days of enforced isolation.

Hundreds of thousands of *Columbus Dispatch* readers have read Blundo’s column, “So to Speak.” His stories will lighten your day, almost as much as a Buckeyes’ football win. Want to know how Brutus Buckeye came about? Read “Their Child Is a Nut But They’re Proud.” The Buckeyes appear in several of the book’s columns.



Blundo loves interviewing couples who have been married for a long time. Not a mere fifty or sixty years, but folks who have been sharing life for seventy or seventy-five years, like John and Annie Glenn on their momentous seventieth anniversary.

His heart-rending human-interest stories help the readers connect with one another and feel compassion for those who are struggling a bit, such as his piece about going to Cleveland with kids from his Methodist church to help “hammer and saw comfort” into the lives of people who are economically challenged.

If you’re reading this review, then you’ve probably chuckled your way through Blundo’s columns, perhaps when he writes about “Things I’m Tired Of,” or one of his song parodies/poems, such as “UA Playa by Joe-Z.” Or maybe you’ve participated in his annual “Joe’s Mildly Entertaining Easter Egg Hunt,” a head-scratcher for many who try to figure out where eggs might be in Central Ohio based on his rhyming riddles.

Since he writes columns based on the news and trends of the times, a few in this collection are a little dated, such as “*The Last Jedi* with a Touch of Buckeye.” But

Blundo’s humor is so good that his essay is only slightly lessened, like eating a fried frozen Milky Way instead of a fried frozen Snickers at the Ohio State Fair—which he does cover in “State Fair Always Makes a Strong Impression.”

Blundo is great at unearthing unusual people, or people with unusual interests. There’s a lot of strange and wonderful folks in the *Dispatch* territory, and Blundo seems to have found most of them to feature in his columns, like digging cashews out of a can of mixed nuts. (*Mixed Nuts* would have been a good title for this collection!)

He likes way-out-there topics, like Danville, Ohio’s, annual Raccoon Dinner, or the professional pig photographer, or the parrot who throws up when he likes someone, or the man who bends gourds into knots, as well as the Calliope King of the World.

Blundo’s columns are short, easy on the eyes, and often warm the heart. They’re like eating peanuts at a Columbus Clippers’ game: you can’t consume just one.

Being the wife or the children of a humor columnist can’t be easy. Everything they do gets filtered through the writer’s eyes to determine if it is column-worthy. Milestones are written about: first formal dance on a date, Commencement, going off to college, first grandchild. Things all families relate to, and feel especially entitled to smile a bit with recognition.

Included is his eulogy for Mike Harden, another beloved *Dispatch* writer. Central Ohio has been very fortunate to have a number of fine newspaper columnists.

It must have been quite the challenge for Tony Sanfillipo and his staff at the Ohio State University Press to choose which of Blundo’s columns to include in this book, which number one hundred. This collection is a Blundo treasury of—as Ted Decker of the *Columbus Dispatch* wrote— “wry humor, twisted wit, and his knack for finding stories in everyday events.” Decker said that in four hundred words, “Joe can tickle your ribs, illuminate your life, and break your heart.”

GEORGE COWMEADOW BAUMAN IS THE FORMER CO-OWNER OF THE ACORN BOOKSHOP NEAR GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS, AND LOVES BOOKS AND BASEBALL. AND CATS.



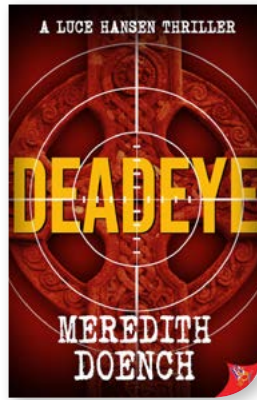
## FICTION

**Doench, Meredith. *Deadeye: A Luce Hansen Thriller #3*.**

Bold Strokes Books (Valley Falls, NY) 2019. PB \$18.95.

Are you looking for a thriller that's got some interesting twists? Meredith Doench's *Deadeye* twists and turns upon itself until the unbelievable conclusion.

The main character, Special Agent Luce Hansen of the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (OBCI), is dedicated, determined, and undeterred as she faces off against an escaped serial killer who hunts hunters.



Luce Hansen is one of a few female Special Agents. She works closely with her lover, Forensic Pathologist Harper Bennett. Both women become embroiled in the search for this serial killer dubbed “Deadeye” for his killing shots.

Deadeye collects trophies as though the murders are a game. But when Hansen looks more closely at the kill shots, she realizes there are two shooters, or perhaps a copycat killer. Which is it? How will she and the detectives she pairs with know? To find out, Hansen must follow the clues and hunt the killers on their own territory.

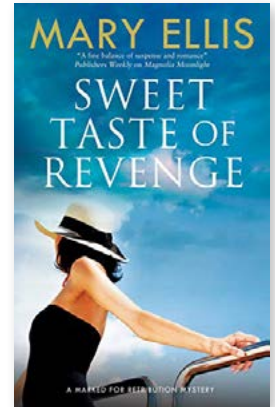
There are few dull moments in this thriller as Hansen follows clues, questions suspects and family members, and digs deep down for the truth. The tension is just right as the story moves forward to its startling conclusion.

REVIEWED BY MIRIAM KAHN, LIBRARIAN, COLUMBUS, OH

**Ellis, Mary. *Sweet Taste of Revenge: A Marked for Retribution Mystery #2*.**  
Seyn House Publishers (London, UK) 2018. HC \$28.99.

**Ellis, Mary. *Island of Last Resorts: A Marked for Retribution Mystery #3*.**  
Seyn House Publishers (London, UK) 2019. HC \$28.99.

In *Sweet Taste of Revenge*, Kate Weller, the newest member of Price Investigations, is sent to Pensacola, Florida, to investigate the murder of Agnes Westin, a not well-liked, yacht-owning socialite. Her daughter, Laney, thinks it was murder; the police aren't certain, but there are plenty of suspects in the Gulf Coast town.

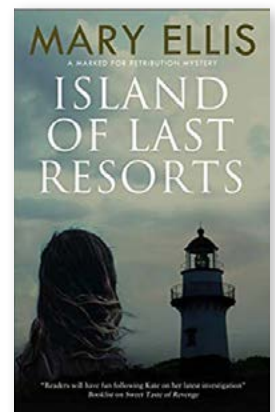


Pensacola is where Kate hails from, and where her brother, Liam, is incarcerated. Sixteen years ago, Liam pled guilty to robbery/homicide and was sentenced to twenty-plus years. Kate was just a little girl. Now, Kate and Liam are both being threatened by men from Liam's past.

Kate's colleague, Eric Manfredi, takes a few days off to scout out a second location for a restaurant, or so he says. Eric and Kate spend time checking out venues and restaurants, but he's also keeping a close eye on Kate. He's sticking close by after the bombing which blew up his truck in *Hiding in Plain Sight*, the first book in the series.

While Kate, with some help from Eric, investigates the socialite's murder, she's also trying to figure out who is threatening her life. It's a tangled tale of revenge, secrets, and so much more.

*Island of Last Resorts* is a mystery-thriller unlike most of Ellis's previous books. It features Nate Price and his entire investigative team, plus their spouses. As luck would have it, Kate Weller, the newest member of the company, and her now-fiancé, Eric Manfredi, miss the boat to the exclusive island retreat, Elysian Island, just off the Georgia coast.



Elysian Island is owned by the ultra-rich recluse, Julian Frazier.

Little do any of them know that this won't be a luxurious week, but one where they risk life and limb to save themselves from a fiendish murderer.

Kate and Eric make it to St. Simons Island the day after Nate and his group leave for Elysian Island. They can't reach the boat captain or any of the members of Price Investigations. What's up with that? As Kate and Eric investigate the island, the captain, and try to figure out how to get there, their friends are trapped in a crazy game of "solve the unsolvable" crime. Both groups must keep themselves sharp and their wits about them to survive this adventure.

Mystery? Yes. Thriller? Absolutely! There are few dull moments as the tension, the suspense, and the crimes add up to make for one harrowing week they'll never forget.

Mary Ellis imbues these slim mysteries with plenty of action, lots of clues, and a host of characters, new and old. In both instances, she allows the investigation to move forward while providing enough backstory that readers don't need to have read each book in the series. In fact, the *Marked for Retribution Mysteries* are connected to Ellis's *Secrets of the South* four-volume series.

In each book, set in the South, you'll experience the hot, sultry days and languid nights, and pulse-pounding adventures with short interludes of thought and insight. Set in different towns, Kate and Eric investigate crimes, explore local culture, and eat scrumptious meals. You'll close each book and yearn for the next in the series.

REVIEWED BY MIRIAM KAHN, LIBRARIAN, COLUMBUS, OH

**Flower, Amanda. *Marshmallow Malice: An Amish Candy Shop Mystery*.**

Kensington Books (New York, NY) 2020. PB \$7.99.

Welcome back to Harvest, Ohio, where the Amish and the *Englisch* live in harmony, or do they? Bailey King, chocolatier extraordinaire and co-owner of Swissmen Sweets, the Amish candy shop, and her Sheriff Deputy boyfriend, Aiden Brody, find themselves investigating

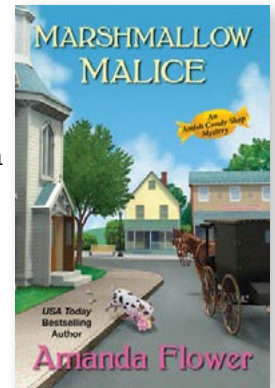
yet another murder. This one happens on the day after Aiden's mother, Juliet, and the Reverend Brook get married. Who gets murdered? The very drunk woman who interrupted the wedding ceremony!

Bailey and her friend Cass, who's visiting from NYC, are busy following leads and trying to avoid getting into trouble. Of course, that would make this cozy mystery really boring. As luck would have it, Jethro, Juliet's polka-dot potbelly pig, sniffs out clues and leads both Bailey and Cass on a merry chase through the Harvest Woods, just where Aiden tells them not to go.

Will Bailey, Aiden, and Cass unravel the mystery? Do you even doubt the answer is yes? You'll have to read *Marshmallow Malice* to find out what the marshmallows have to do with the murder.

Amanda Flower's Amish life in a very small Ohio town is full of mystery, laughs, and old friends. You'll have to read this fifth installment of Flower's *Amish Candy Shop Mysteries* to learn more about Bailey, Aiden, and their four-footed friends.

REVIEWED BY MIRIAM KAHN, LIBRARIAN, COLUMBUS, OH

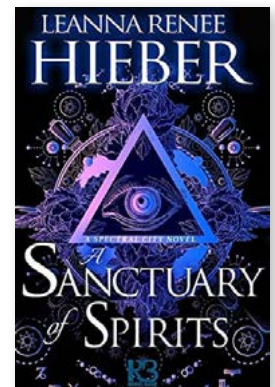


**Hieber, Leanna Renee. *A Sanctuary of Spirits (The Spectral City Novels Book 2)*.**

Kensington/RebelBase (New York, NY) 2019. PB \$15.95.

This book feels like a hug at a time when just about everyone I know could use one.

Before I get into the book, let me introduce the author. Leanna Renee Hieber hails from rural Ohio and is a bestselling, award-winning author. She is widely considered to be the vanguard of adult and young adult "gaslamp fantasy" and routinely lectures on Gothic fiction and paranormal writing around the country.





*A Sanctuary of Spirits*, which is book two in the *Spectral City Novels*, was published in 2019. Hieber could not have known what 2020 would be like, but her novel feels somehow prescient. If everyone would take a break from the craziness and read this book, the world would be a better place.

Hieber is known for writing lush, character-driven paranormal tales, and this one is no exception. The story picks up right where book one left off. Miss Eve Whitby and the gang are part of the NYPD's Ghost Precinct where they consult and comfort ghosts who help them solve crimes. Obviously, not everyone is on board with this idea. As they fight for legitimacy and official support, the misfit crew bands together to work on cases that the police can't—or won't—solve. This thankless and often belittled work is done out of sheer determination and a passion to make the world a better, safer place.

Couldn't we all use a little more of that?

I will admit that in the beginning I kept getting pulled out of the story because the characters felt unrealistically enlightened for the late 1800s. Perhaps I reacted that way because this book is so realistic in every other way. Hieber's descriptions of the period's clothing, electronics, social interactions, etc. have clearly been thoroughly researched. The author's knowledge of New York's history shines on every page. That having been said, I had to remind myself that the novel and its characters were a fantasy in order to slip into the book's warm embrace.

This is where the hug comes in. It was so refreshing to read a story where people from different classes, religions, genders, and ages supported each other with respect, consideration, and kindness as they worked toward a common goal. However, the warm fuzziness did not detract from this mystery's intensity or pacing.

The innocent peripheral romantic tension between Miss Eve Whitby and Detective Jacob Horowitz also adds a little thrill. This story manages to make brushing someone's ungloved hand titillating. No easy feat.

Hieber's endings are pure genius because they give you enough closure that you feel satisfied while still whetting your appetite for the next story. This is extraordinarily hard to do, but *A Sanctuary of Spirits* makes it look effortless.

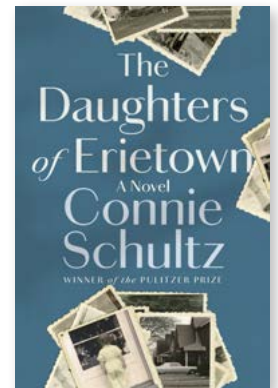
But, you ask, can I start at book two? Yes. The author generously weaves in the backstory, so you will not be lost. (As an added bit of fun, this series occasionally references the *Magic Most Foul* saga which involved Eve's parents.) You *can* start with book two, but with the story's third installment, *A Summoning of Souls*, coming out in July, why not start from the beginning? You won't regret it. It's a truly binge-worthy series.

ANDRA PAITZ IS AS A FREELANCE SPECULATIVE-FICTION EDITOR IN CINCINNATI WHO VALIANTLY TRIES TO IGNORE THE TWO CUTEST DOGS IN CANINE HISTORY WHILE SHE WORKS

## Schultz, Connie. *The Daughters of Erietown*.

Random House (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$28.

Connie Schultz has won many accolades for her nonfiction, including a Pulitzer Prize in 2005 for her work at *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*. In 2008, she was an Ohioana Book Award Finalist for her book *...and His Lovely Wife*, about her life with Sherrod Brown, the senior Democratic U.S. Senator for Ohio.



So the news of Schultz's first foray into fiction was met with great enthusiasm, and *The Daughters of Erietown* does not disappoint. This multi-generational tale of a family in northeast Ohio begins in 1957, when young Ellie is abandoned by her parents and taken to live with her grandparents. The timeline goes well into the 1980s, when Ellie's daughter, Sam, becomes the first female principal at the same high school Ellie had to drop out of when she became pregnant with Sam at age sixteen.

This story feels very real. It does not flinch away from depictions of anger and child abuse, from fraught spousal tension and extramarital affairs. The raw emotion of the Kennedy assassination, the Vietnam War, and the Kent State shootings is ever palpable over Erietown and the other small towns in Clayton Valley. Racial and class tensions are not glossed over, but shown in all their realistic ugliness.

Despite all of this, there is an underlying hope and even sweetness to the story, and that comes down to the

characters. Through both adversity and good times, the women of Erietown support each other. When an outside character, Rose, moves to Erietown from rural southern Ohio in the early 1960s, she is awestruck to be assisted by an African American woman, Mrs. Colbert, and never forgets it. Rose, Sam, and Ellie are all supported by grandmothers, aunts, and friends.

Ellie asks, in a vulnerable moment after her son is born, “Was it always like this? Did we always depend on each other like this? On other women?” Her nurse is not even surprised by the question. She merely shrugs and replies in the affirmative. The realistic female relationships are the backbone of this story; they are universal and should appeal to many people, even if they did not live through the time period of the story, or have never set foot in northeastern Ohio.

REVIEWED BY COURTNEY BROWN, OHIOANA LIBRARY SPECIALIST

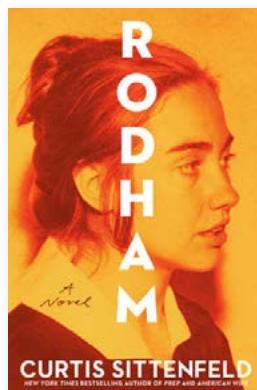
### Sittenfeld, Curtis. *Rodham*.

Random House (New York, NY) 2020. HC \$28.

The basic concept of this novel by Curtis Sittenfeld, the Cincinnati native and best-selling author of *American Wife*, is rather unusual. It asks a question: “What if Hillary Rodham had never married Bill Clinton?”

Expanding on this intriguing idea is what is essentially Hillary Clinton pastiche, beginning in the first throes of her days of meeting and becoming infatuated with a man who she knows is bad for her, who she knows is a philanderer and a liar, but who she can’t stay away from. Some readers will be turned off by the explicit sex scenes between two actual, living people, of which there are plenty. Real-life fans of both Clintons, though, may be intrigued by the scenario as presented by Sittenfeld.

In actuality, Hillary turned down Bill’s offer of marriage twice before accepting his third. In the novel, she rejects the third offer and heads down her own path. An alternate history of the United States is presented in the second half of the book, as Hillary Rodham rises



to power and eventually runs for president. Sittenfeld does not gloss over potentially controversial topics; in addition to the sex, the book also directly addresses the Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill hearings, the rise of Donald Trump, and Bill Clinton’s adultery and the Monica Lewinsky scandal, albeit with a different person as his wife.

All of this is presented directly from Hillary’s first-person point of view. Hillary seems to sacrifice personal relationships in favor of political ambition and success, and as a result, sometimes comes across as flat and even cold. Sittenfeld’s intent to tell an alternative history, though, is certainly interesting and may appeal to Clinton fans and political junkies of any stripe. Historical fiction often attempts to give us an insight into the private lives of real-life figures, sometimes as wish-fulfillment fantasy, which can be a great and very entertaining thing to read. That will appeal to many readers of this book.

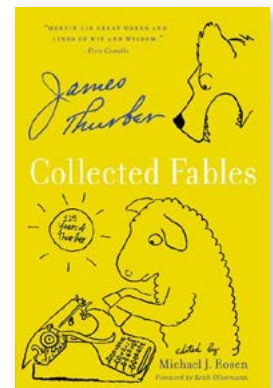
REVIEWED BY COURTNEY BROWN, OHIOANA LIBRARY SPECIALIST

### Thurber, James. Ed. by Michael J. Rosen. *James Thurber Collected Fables*.

Harper Perennial Modern Classics (New York, NY) 2019. PB \$15.99.

*Once upon a time there was...* a man named James Thurber who wrote a series of fables featuring a mix of human and animal characters, expounding on the frailties and foibles of men (and women) in the modern era. His humorous musings on the absurdities of *homo sapiens* remain instructive as we muddle through the challenges and choices of modern life.

In the opening essay, “A Fabulist for Our Time,” editor and fellow Ohioan Michael J. Rosen notes that, “Humor is the midpoint between boorishly whining and feverishly declaiming, between ‘woe is me’ and ‘listen to me!’” Thurber captures this midpoint as he addresses, among other topics, the conundrums of love, lost hope, mistrust and suspicion,





hate, peace, and the vagaries of language. Each of the fables, of course, concludes with a moral. In “The Scotty Who Knew Too Much,” Thurber tells the tale of a self-important city dog who takes his attitude to the country. There he encounters a farm dog and a number of other wild critters. The story ends with the Scotty getting his comeuppance, the moral a succinct, “It is better to ask some of the questions than to know all the answers.”

Keith Olbermann points out in the foreword that the fable has become less popular as literary tastes and trends have changed, although the formula remains the same: “There is only one valid recipe and it is simple. Take a pointed and recognizable aspect of human behavior, stir it up with talking animals or trees or persons or piggy banks or anything else, and turn it out in a concentrated narrative.”

Changing times may have led to less knowledge of and appreciation for Thurber’s work. However, 2019—the 125th anniversary of Thurber’s birth—seemed more than appropriate to reintroduce the public to the author’s work by publishing a compilation of his tales. This collection is divided into three sections: *Fables for Our Time*, *Further Fables for Our Time*, and *Uncollected Fables*. Each grouping offers a look at Thurber’s musings on humanity’s strengths and weaknesses. In the second section, the tale of “The Bears and the Monkeys” introduces a slick monkey named Glib who attempts to talk the bears out of their normal habits and follies. This leads to their enslavement and, eventually, to revolt and a return to living the way they used to do. The moral? “It is better to have the ring of freedom in your ears than in your nose.”

James Thurber is one of Ohio’s most celebrated authors. His hometown of Columbus honored him by proclaiming 2019 “The Year of Thurber.” An exhibition of his art, which he drew to accompany his fables, was held at The Columbus Museum of Art. The stories in the collection are accompanied by drawings, some original and some adapted from illustrations Thurber drew before he went blind.

Thurber’s fables are best enjoyed one at a time, when the reader has time to chuckle at his observations and ponder the message each one conveys.

REVIEWED BY JANET E. IRVIN, CAREER EDUCATOR AND AUTHOR OF THE HOPEWELL MYSTERY SERIES, RESIDES IN SPRINGBORO, OHIO.

## POETRY

### Paulenich, Craig. *Old Brown*.

Bottom Dog Press (Huron, OH) 2018. PB \$16.

I’ll admit, I’m a bit intimidated by poetry books with a historical angle or historical characters. The “not knowing what I should know” is—well—embarrassing. I picked up Salem, Ohio, poet Craig Paulenich’s *Old Brown* and first thought: *why’s Abe Lincoln on the cover?*

Not Abe Lincoln. It’s abolitionist John Brown from Hudson, Ohio, who was hanged on charges of treason, murder, and insurrection.



The collection is an epic. As a poet, Paulenich is maestro of the metaphor; samurai of the simile. Though my clichés might seem trite, Paulenich’s use of literary device is far from a gimmick. Paulenich is a wise raconteur, an American folk writer whose skill at imagery continues to elevate from his first book, *Drift of the Hunt* (Nobodaddies Press, 2006).

My favorite poem was the title poem. The rhythm is part tall tale, part Warren Zevon. Paulenich weaves history with pop culture like a New York School graduate: *He was Wonderbread and Red Ball Jest,/Hated Masons and paper money and a Captain in the way that Sanders was a Colonel, or Bean a Judge.*

The first part of the book is a blend of shorter lyrical poems and longer ballads. The combination creates a complex story. Think of the movie *Jojo Rabbit*. How could a horrifying story about the effects of Nazism on children and their families have laugh out loud moments? The only answer I have is talented storytelling. Paulenich is a poet of that class. The whimsical lines from poems I enjoyed at the beginning began to weave with the terrifying truth of slavery.

In the second part of the book, Paulenich writes letter poems. The letter poems have the ability to transport the reader back to that time. I felt I personally had received the letters and felt my chest tighten with the melancholy moments shared by their sender. Along with the letter

poems were prose poems. The prose poems toward the end of the book almost became too much. Too much brutal history. And with those brutal lessons, realizing one cliché's falsehood—ignorance is not bliss.

REVIEWED BY J.M. GREEN, WRITER AND LIBRARIAN AT XAVIER UNIVERSITY

## YOUNG ADULT & MIDDLE GRADE

### Adrian, Emily. *The Foreseeable Future*.

Dial Books (New York, NY) 2018. HC \$17.99.

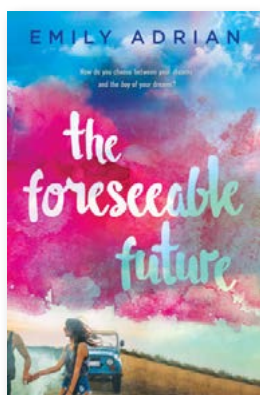
Did you know what you wanted to do when you graduated high school? Did your parents influence your decisions? The answers to these questions are probably no and yes, so it won't be a surprise that that's what this book is about.

Audrey Nelson, the child of two professors in a small town, is going through her first life crisis. She just graduated high school and isn't certain she wants to go to college, let alone at home. She's visited Seattle and wants to move there, but life throws her a few curve balls. Audrey takes a job in a nursing home to keep herself busy and meets Seth O'Malley, prom king and the school's football star. Seth not only works at the nursing home, but he's a dream, he's kind, and he becomes her anchor in an ever-evolving home life as her parents' marriage becomes rocky.

Audrey performs CPR on a classmate who collapses during a beach party and the video goes viral. Her life is turned upside down. As the fallout from the video explodes, Seth is her anchor and becomes her true friend.

Adrian writes a compelling and engaging story full of descriptions of a family falling apart while struggling to stay together. There's never a dull moment. The book is about growing up, trusting others, and speaking your mind. It's about finding yourself and following your dreams. It's also about commitment to friends, spouse, and family. It's written for readers of all ages, although aims at a YA and twenties audience.

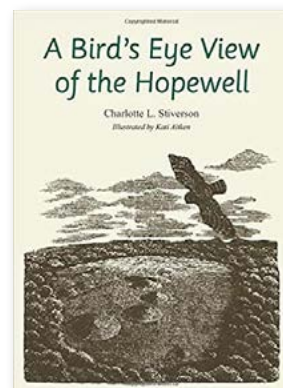
REVIEWED BY MIRIAM KAHN, LIBRARIAN, COLUMBUS, OH



### Stiverson, Charlotte L. Illus. by Kati Aitken. *A Bird's Eye View of the Hopewell*.

Wrinkled Rock Press (Bainbridge, OH) 2019. PB \$9.99.

*A Bird's Eye View of the Hopewell* is an engaging story written by Charlotte L. Stiverson, who is an experienced teacher for elementary school children. As a teacher myself, I see this book as a valuable resource in helping students explore the wonderful past of prehistoric American Indian Culture. Education of children should be more than a dry presentation of subjects and skills—at its best, it kindles a fire of curiosity and excites the imagination to learn independently, to explore the world that unfolds with learning.



This little volume presents an engaging story of animals, as curious as children, observing the movement of Native Americans traveling the river highways of the New World in North America. The fascinating tale of huge earthworks, with astronomical positions more accurate than Stonehenge in England, stirs an interest in history, culture, and astronomy. This little volume is well written and creatively illustrated. The afterword explains the significance of the earthworks in Ohio and the bibliography lists a number of earthwork sites for great field trips. A glossary of definitions also gives any teacher a more complete picture for classroom use. This book is thoroughly researched and appropriate for storytelling or lesson plans.

As an elementary school teacher in both public and private school classrooms, I recommend *A Bird's Eye View of the Hopewell* to open a window for young minds to the storied past of human culture.

REVIEWED BY TAMMIE W. BENTLEY, RETIRED ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER

### Warga, Jasmine. *Other Words for Home*.

Balzer + Bray (New York, NY) 2019. HC \$16.99.

There are many things Jude loves about her home in Syria. She loves spending time with her best friend,



Fatima, and her older brother. She loves the food her mother makes and learning about math and science in school. But when things begin to become volatile in her hometown, Jude and her mother leave the country to live in Cincinnati with relatives. Now an ocean away and removed from everything she's familiar with, Jude has to reevaluate her view of herself and her place in the world.



*Other Words for Home* is a delightful and hopeful novel in verse about a young girl's journey in exploring her identity and the way she and her culture are viewed in other parts of the world. Jude is a remarkably strong, kind, and intelligent protagonist, and her story is a beautiful example of how to deal with change and adversity. After moving to Ohio, she is at first understandably scared and resistant. She is in a new country, a guest in her uncle's home, in a town where she knows no one besides her own family members.

The beauty in Jude's story is in her reaction to her situation. At times it seems insurmountable—when she begins school, she learns that others form immediate opinions of her based solely on her appearance and nationality, that she is suddenly a “Middle Eastern” girl instead of just a girl. In addition, the language barrier makes it difficult to communicate. While she is used to being able to readily speak her mind, words no longer come easily. Instead of backing down, though, Jude steps up. She reacts to the misconceptions and even hostility toward her culture with patience and resilience. She forges friendships with other international students, and even lands a part in the school play against all odds.

As mentioned, *Other Words for Home* is written in verse and it reads like one long and lyrical poem. The effect is wonderful—Jude's story takes on a dreamy and unique quality, and the format is a wonderful way to convey the genuine emotion in her story. Though Jude's story presents a specific situation, her experiences, thoughts, and feelings will be very relatable to a young audience. In the end, the message is clear—Jude wants what every pre-teen would like: to fit in and explore her passions. Readers will adore Jude and enjoy following her story.

REVIEWED BY MORGAN PETERS, OHIOANA PROGRAM COORDINATOR

## CHILDREN'S

**Salas, Laura Purdie. Illus. by Angela Matteson. *In the Middle of the Night*.**

Wordsong (Honesdale, PA) 2019. HC \$17.95.

What do your slippers, pencils, and toys do in the wee hours of the night? In this whimsical picture book, they all wake up for wacky nighttime frolicking while all the humans are fast asleep!



Written in twenty-six fun and humorous poems, *In the Middle of the Night* explores the antics of anthropomorphic household items. The story begins in a child's bedroom, where after the sun goes down, the stuffed animals perk up and start the night with a talent show. The poems that follow cast creative spotlights on other items—a lidless marker lamenting his uselessness; an empty pocket longing for string, coins, and pebbles; and an overdue library book that loves to play hide-and-seek.

But the anthropomorphic journey doesn't stay limited to the bedroom, and soon the reader is on an adventure around the house. A pit stop in the bathroom results in the hilarious poem, “Toilet Gets Bummed Out,” and off in the kitchen, leftover food struggles to find a new purpose in “Spaghetti Tries to Fit In.” But after all the nocturnal hijinks, the shoes, strawberries, and sports equipment make sure to return to their proper places at dawn.

*In the Middle of the Night* is an entertaining picture book for all ages. Salas's lyrical words are fresh and creative, utilizing a variety of poetry styles from acrostics to limericks. An adult-reader and child pair will especially have fun reading the two-voice poems together. The illustrations, created by Ohioan Matteson, are full of energy, expression, and charm, truly giving life to the inanimate characters. Kids will enjoy finding silly details throughout the pages, like the book's hide-and-seek spots and the assortment of pint-sized objects that the pocket dreams of holding. The text and art combine to create a unique story that will make you wonder what your own forks and paperclips do when you're not looking.

REVIEWED BY KATHRYN POWERS, OHIOANA LIBRARY OFFICE MANAGER AND SCBWI REGIONAL ADVISOR

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## Patricia Sargeant Supports Ohioana

Ohioana: Of or related to all things Ohio.

The Ohioana Library Association has been collecting, preserving, and promoting works by Ohio authors, artists, and musicians for almost a century. Founded in 1929, the library's collection has grown to include more than 45,000 books by or about Ohioans; 20,000 biographical files on Ohio writers, artists, and musicians; 10,000 pieces of sheet music; and scrapbooks created by Ohio civic and cultural organizations. That's quite a collection. It's a statement and a celebration of who we are, what we think, and how we've contributed to our community and the world.

Why is this important?

Well, close your eyes and imagine that this collection didn't exist. Imagine there was no record of who we are, what we've done, the stories we've told, the music we've made, or the art we've created. Imagine the works of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Erma Bombeck, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Nikki Giovanni, Wil Haygood, Toni Morrison, R. L. Stine, James Thurber, and Mildred Wirt Benson (aka Carolyn Keene), and their connections to Ohio had not been preserved. Consider that no one knew these visionaries had been inspired by the sights, sounds, and people of Ohio. I find those imaginings chilling. Don't you?

As an author, I'm proud to have my work included among the library's collection. As an Ohioan, I'm proud to show the world the impact we've made. This is one of the many reasons the Ohioana Library Association is important to me. It's one of the many reasons I have and will continue to support it, and I encourage you to support the library and its mission as well. Thank you.



Patricia Sargeant. Photo credit: Olivia Matthews.

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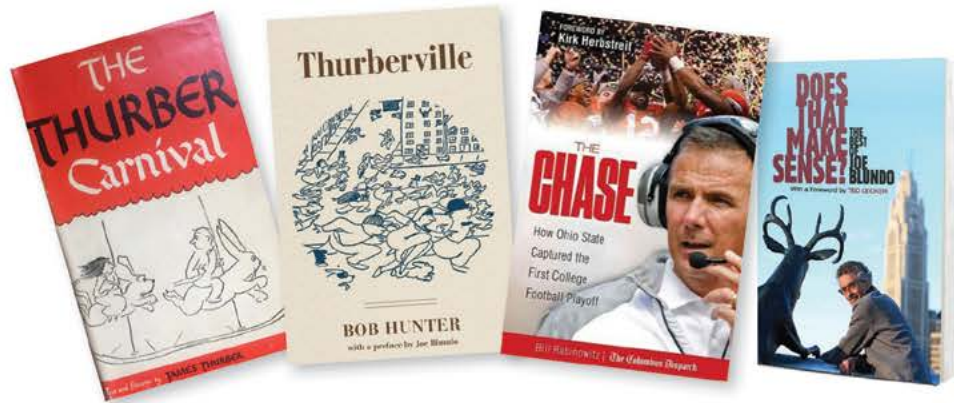
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## Save the Date!

Join us for the 91st annual meeting of the Ohioana Library Association on Thursday, October 15, 2020, at 3:00 p.m. at the State Library of Ohio, 274 E. First Ave., Columbus, OH 43201 (subject to move online). The meeting is free and open to all members of Ohioana; the agenda will include the election of trustees. RSVP by email to: [ohioana@ohioana.org](mailto:ohioana@ohioana.org)