

Summer 2025 | VOL. 68 NO. 3



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Who We Are:

The Ohioana Library Association

At Ohioana, we elevate Ohio's written works and the creative minds behind them, celebrating our collective literary history. Whether it's through our unique events and programming, our extensive library collection, or our print and digital publications, everything we do is with the goal of connecting readers and Ohio writers.

OHIOana QUARTERLY

SUMMER 2025

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From the Director

Dear Friends,



Photo by Chris Walker

For Ohioana this is “the most wonderful time of the year” as we announce the winners of the 2025 Ohio Book Awards, as well as the winner of the Walter Rumsey Marvin Grant for an emerging writer age thirty or younger who has not yet published a book. In this issue, you will find information about the 2025 Ohio Book Award winners and finalists, and have a chance to read a portion of the Marvin Grant recipient’s essay. As in past years, this year’s award winners are a stellar group of authors and illustrators who have created books that will pull you in and keep you wanting to read—which we encourage you to do with the new “Ohio Reading Challenge” taking place now through September 15! We also hope you will consider purchasing a ticket for the 2025 Ohio Book Awards ceremony and reception taking place on Wednesday, October 15, from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Ohio Statehouse. You can purchase tickets on our website at: <https://www.ohioana.org/programs/ohio-book-awards>.

In addition to the Ohio Book Awards, we’re also celebrating Ohio’s connection to the silver screen with Ohio Goes to the Movies! Read about Ohio Goes to the Movies’ red carpet plans for the United States Semiquincentennial and Ohioana’s partnership with OGTTM in an interview with program director Molly Kreuzman. We also have a special feature on the Ohio Goes to the Movies Literary Trail, where you can discover historic books written by Ohioans that have been adapted to film. Lastly, this October brings the long-awaited dedication ceremony of the Rod Serling Ohio Historical Marker at Antioch College in Yellow Springs. You can find information about the event and guest speakers, as well as learn more about Rod Serling’s connection to Ohio, on page 22.

While we are excited about the upcoming Ohio Book Awards and our other programs, we are also sad to have to let you know that this issue of the *Ohioana Quarterly* will be your last issue for the time being. It has been a tough year for nonprofits and libraries. Grant funding has been cut or eliminated, memberships and sponsorships are down, and budgets are tight. Our board met and voted to put the *Ohioana Quarterly* on hiatus while we work to improve our visibility across the state, increase our donor base, and grow new relationships with sponsors and partners. That said, we have a host of new, already-funded programs coming up including a book discussion series that pairs historic books with current authors in the same genre, and a 2026 calendar celebrating Ohio authors and illustrators that will go on sale in December.

Your support for Ohioana throughout the years has been what has kept us going, and it will be what continues to allow us to preserve Ohio’s stories. We are committed to not only keeping the organization running, but to growing its visibility and stature. We will continue to be in touch with you through a new newsletter format and we hope you will continue to stay connected to us. Please feel free to reach out to me personally at kkiehl@ohioana.org or at 614-387-1307 with any questions or suggestions.

With enormous gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kimberlee L. Kiehl".

Kimberlee Kiehl
Executive Director

ON THE COVER

A celebration of the winners and finalists for the 2025 Ohio Book Awards. Designed by Kathryn Powers.

The 2025 Ohio Book Awards: A Celebration of Ohio's Best Books

By Kathryn Powers

The Ohioana Library is pleased to present the winners and finalists for the 84th annual Ohio Book Awards. First given in 1942, the awards are the second-oldest state literary prize in the nation. This year is extra momentous with the separation of the Middle Grade & Young Adult category into two distinct awards. With this addition, the Ohio Book Awards now honor outstanding works by Ohio authors and illustrators across eight categories including Fiction, Juvenile, Middle Grade, Nonfiction, Poetry, and Young Adult. The seventh category, About Ohio or an Ohioan, may also include books by non-Ohio authors. The eighth category, Reader's Choice, is selected by the public through an online voting process.

We invite you to join us for the 2025 Ohio Book Awards reception and ceremony taking place on October 15, 2025, from 5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Ohio Statehouse. The program will include the presentation of awards and conversations with each winner, as well as the winner of the 2025 Walter Rumsey Marvin Grant, Claudia Owusu. (Read an excerpt from Owusu's winning essay on page 14.) The evening promises to be an unforgettable experience featuring distinguished literature, inspiring conversation, delicious food and drinks, and some surprises, too. Books will be available

for purchase at the event through the Statehouse Museum Shop, with author signings taking place after the program.

Limited tickets for the 2025 Ohio Book Awards event are on sale now at: <https://www.ohioana.org/programs/ohio-book-awards>.

To celebrate this year's best Ohio books, Ohioana is also launching the new "Ohio Reading Challenge." This bingo-style challenge involves the completion of reading tasks, with the twist that all books read must be by Ohio authors and illustrators or about Ohio. You can complete the challenge board with titles from the list of 2025 Ohio Book Award winners and finalists, or read any Ohio book.

Additionally, the "Ohio Reading Challenge" features fantastic prizes including gift cards from local independent bookstores and a grand prize of two tickets to the 2025 Ohio Book Awards ceremony and reception.

Read on to discover the winners and finalists for the 2025 Ohio Book Awards, learn about the "Ohio Reading Challenge" rules and game board, meet our indie bookstore partners, and—most importantly—get excited about the big event on October 15!

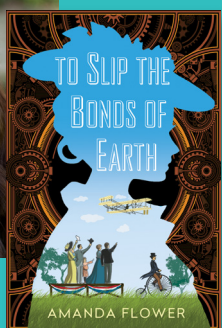
Readers' Choice

WINNER *To Slip the Bonds of Earth*
(A Katharine Wright Mystery)

Amanda Flower

New York, NY: Kensington, 2024.

Amanda Flower is a *USA Today*–bestselling and Agatha Award–winning author who lives in Northeast Ohio. *To Slip the Bonds of Earth* is a historical mystery inspired by the real sister of the Wright brothers. Katharine Wright may not be as famous as her older siblings, Wilbur and Orville, but she's equally inventive and clever—especially when it comes to solving crimes.

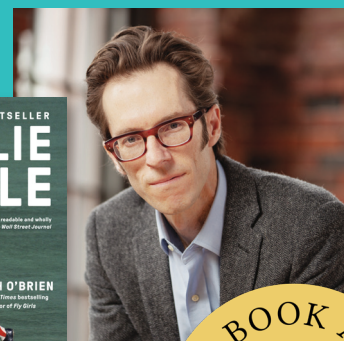
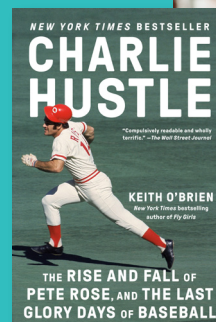


About Ohio or an Ohioan

WINNER *Charlie Hustle: The Rise and Fall of Pete Rose, and the Last Glory Days of Baseball*
Keith O'Brien

New York, NY: Pantheon, 2024.

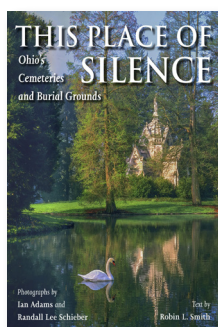
A Cincinnati native now living in New Hampshire, Keith O'Brien is a *New York Times*–bestselling author and winner of the 2025 PEN America award for Best Biography. *Charlie Hustle* chronicles the infamous sports career of Pete Rose—one of baseball's most iconic, charismatic, and polarizing figures—providing a cultural history of baseball and America in the second half of the twentieth century.



Finalists

This Place of Silence: Ohio's Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

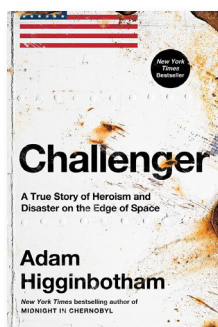
Ian Adams & Randall Lee Schieber
Text by Robin L. Smith
Athens, OH: Swallow Press, 2024.



Told through the stunning images of Ohio photographers Ian Adams and Randall Lee Schieber, with text and captions by Ohio writer Robin L. Smith, *This Place of Silence* provides an overview of burial grounds in the Buckeye State, from prehistoric mounds through modern “green” cemeteries, including details about gravestones, mausoleums, and statuary.

Challenger: A True Story of Heroism and Disaster on the Edge of Space

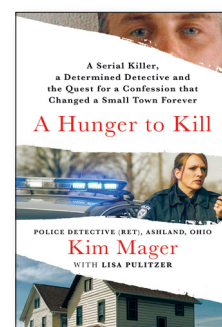
Adam Higginbotham
New York, NY: Avid Reader Press, 2024.



On January 28, 1986, just seventy-three seconds into flight, the space shuttle *Challenger* broke apart over the Atlantic, killing all seven people on board. Blending human drama and science, *New York Times*–bestselling author Adam Higginbotham reveals the history of the American shuttle program, and the lives of the men and women whose stories have been overshadowed by disaster.

A Hunger to Kill: A Serial Killer, a Determined Detective, and the Quest for a Confession that Changed a Small Town Forever

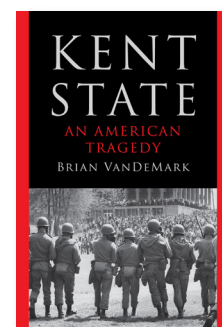
Kim Mager and Lisa Pulitzer
New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2024.



A Hunger to Kill takes readers behind the scenes of 2016's “The Ladykiller” serial killer case in Ashland, Ohio, and how Detective Kim Mager stopped Shawn Grate's murderous rampage. Mager's chilling account is written in collaboration with *New York Times*–bestselling author Lisa Pulitzer.

Kent State: An American Tragedy

Brian VanDeMark
New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2024.



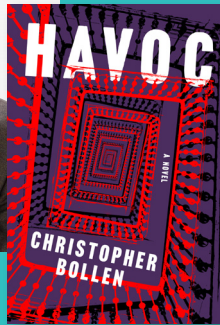
Focusing on the thirteen victims of the Kent State shooting and a painstaking reconstruction of the days surrounding the tragic event, historian Brian VanDeMark draws on crucial new research and interviews for this thorough account—including, for the first time, the perspective of guardsmen who were there. The result is an encompassing picture of the fatal clash between Vietnam War protestors and the National Guard that marked the end of the sixties.

Fiction

WINNER *Havoc* Christopher Bollen

New York, NY: Harper, 2024.

Born in Cincinnati and currently living in New York City, Christopher Bollen is a critically-acclaimed novelist and contributor to *Vanity Fair*, the *New York Times*, and *Interview*. *Havoc* is a psychological thriller centered on the war between age and youth. A compulsive fixer of other people's lives, when eighty-one-year-old Maggie Burkhardt meddles in the affairs of a young mother and her homely, eight-year-old son, Otto, she finally meets her wicked match.



Finalists

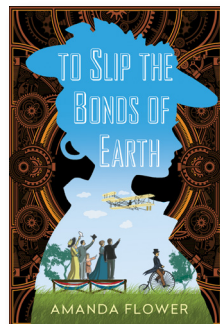
Readers' Choice Winner

To Slip the Bonds of Earth (A Katharine Wright Mystery)

Amanda Flower

New York, NY: Kensington, 2024.

A riveting mystery inspired by true history, Amanda Flowers' newest series gives the independent and intellectual younger sister of the Wright brothers, Katharine Wright, a chance to spread her wings. When Orville and Wilbur are framed for murder, it's up to Katharine to find the true killer.



She Who Knows

Nnedi Okorafor

New York, NY: DAW, 2024.

Part science fiction, part fantasy, and entirely fused with West African culture and spirituality, this novel offers an intimate glimpse into the life of a teenager whose coming of age will herald a new age for her world. Set in the universe Nnedi Okorafor first introduced in the World Fantasy Award-winning novel *Who Fears Death*, this is the first in the She Who Knows trilogy.

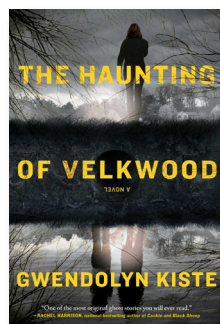


The Haunting of Velkwood

Gwendolyn Kiste

New York, NY: Simon & Schuster/Saga Press, 2024.

One night, a block of homes disappeared behind a veil that only three survivors could enter—or exit. Twenty years later, Talitha Velkwood and her childhood friends, Brett and Grace, are going back for answers. From Bram Stoker Award-winning author Gwendolyn Kiste, *The Haunting of Velkwood* is a chilling suburban ghost story about three young women who must confront the past if they're going to have a future.

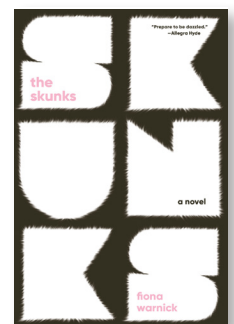


The Skunks

Fiona Warnick

Portland, OR: Tin House, 2024.

Isabel, a recent college grad feeling adrift, takes a summer housesitting gig. As the long, hot days unfold, she becomes increasingly preoccupied with three baby skunks living in the yard, while also navigating an ambiguous relationship with Eli, her housesitting clients' son. In her own life, and in the imagined inner lives of the skunks, Isabel ponders the nature of existence, love versus infatuation, and the small moments that make us animal—and make us human.



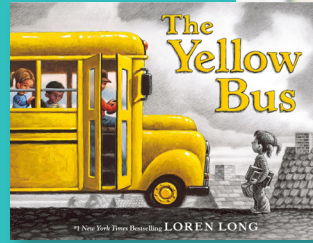
Juvenile

WINNER *The Yellow Bus*

Loren Long

New York, NY: Roaring Brook Press, 2024.

Loren Long is an author and illustrator from Cincinnati with thirteen books on the *New York Times* bestseller list, including *The Yellow Bus*. Yellow Bus loves carrying children from one important place to another. As time passes, the drivers, routes, and passengers change. But no matter where she is, Yellow Bus still finds joy and discovery in the world around her in this warm reflection on the many beginnings life has to offer.



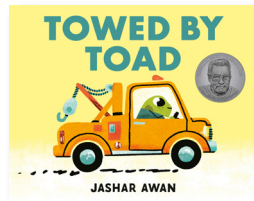
Finalists

Towed by Toad

Jashar Awan

Toronto, Canada: Tundra Books, 2024.

Day and night, Toad and his faithful tow truck are always on the move, lending a helping hand to anyone in need. But what happens when his tow truck breaks down? Toad learns that even the helpers need help sometimes in this funny and thoughtful book by Geisel Honor-winning author and illustrator Jashar Awan.



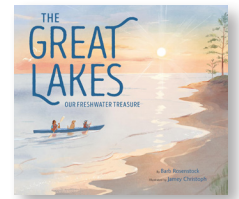
ways of communicating. Author and illustrator Margaret Peot's informative text is accompanied by her signature watercolor illustrations, creating a beautiful tribute to these clever and social members of the corvidae family.

The Great Lakes: Our Freshwater Treasure

Barb Rosenstock

Illus. by Jamey Christoph

New York, NY: Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2024.

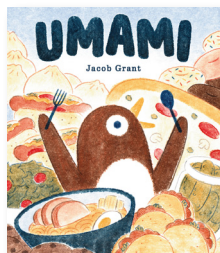


Umami

Jacob Grant

New York, NY: Viking Books for Young Readers, 2024.

Tired of eating the same fish day after day, Umami travels the world trying different and delicious food. Will her friends back home share her love for these new flavors? Jacob Grant's expressive text and illustrations encourage young readers to explore their culinary curiosities.



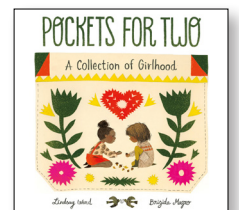
Follow along as a drop of water in this lyrical overview of the largest lakes in North America. Lush, detailed paintings by Ohio illustrator Jamey Christoph show how the Great Lakes formed, the importance of their abundant freshwater, and how they've become a national treasure.

Pockets for Two: A Collection of Girlhood

Lindsay Ward

Illus. by Brizida Magro

New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2024.

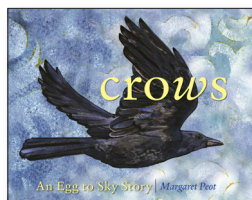


Crows: An Egg-to-Sky Story

Margaret Peot

Essex, CT: Muddy Boots, 2024.

This nonfiction picture book introduces children to the fascinating world of crows, from how they raise their young and learn to fly to their unique



A friendship begins between two young girls on the first day of school. Throughout the year, they fill their pockets with everything from cookies to wiggly worms as their friendship blooms. With sweet text by Ohioan Lindsay Ward, *Pockets for Two* is a magical celebration of girlhood, friendship, and the best part of any outfit.

Middle Grade

WINNER *Summer at Squee*

Andrea Wang

New York, NY: Kokila, 2024.

Newbery Honor-winning author Andrea Wang spent her childhood in Yellow Springs, Ohio, and now lives in Colorado. In *Summer at Squee*, tween Phoenny Fang can't wait to return to Summertime Chinese Culture, Wellness, and Enrichment Experience (SCCWEE, a.k.a. "Squee"), until she realizes that the things that make her feel connected to her culture and community make some of the other campers feel excluded.



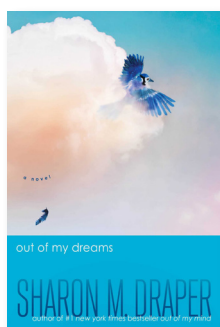
Finalists

Out of My Dreams

Sharon M. Draper

New York, NY: Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books, 2024.

In this uplifting sequel to the acclaimed *New York Times*-bestselling middle grade novels *Out of My Mind* and *Out of My Heart*, Melody Brooks flies to London to speak at the I.D.E.A. symposium, a gathering of differently-abled kids from all over the globe who want to make the world more equal for everyone, no matter the challenges they face. But how can Melody give a speech when she's never spoken a word out loud in her life?



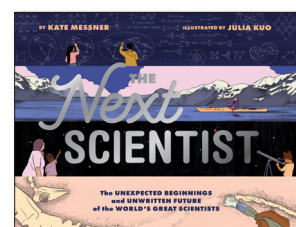
The Next Scientist: The Unexpected Beginnings and Unwritten Future of the World's Great Scientists

Kate Messner

Illus. by Julia Kuo

San Francisco, CA: Chronicle, 2024.

How does a kid grow up to become a scientist? With lyrical text by Kate Messner and pictures by award-winning Ohio illustrator Julia Kuo, *The Next Scientist* explores the unexpected beginnings behind some of the most fascinating discoveries in scientific history. From astronomy to zoology, this fun-to-read educational book shows readers that scientists are all around us.



Mallory in Full Color

Elisa Stone Leahy

New York, NY: Quill Tree Books, 2024.

Mallory Marsh's true thoughts and feelings only come out in her sci-fi web comic, which she publishes anonymously as Dr. BotGirl. When the comic goes viral and kids at school start recognizing the unflattering characters based on Mal's real-life friends, she must navigate questions of identity and friendship in this funny and poignant middle grade novel.



A Strange Thing Happened in Cherry Hall

Jasmine Warga

New York, NY: HarperCollins/Balzer + Bray, 2024.

Two kids, Rani and Veda, embark on an extraordinary adventure to solve the mystery of a missing museum painting. Agatha the garden turtle knows the truth, but she can't exactly tell anyone . . . can she? Newbery Honor-winning author Jasmine Warga weaves a whimsical story about the universal desire to be seen and understood, and how art can help us find connection.



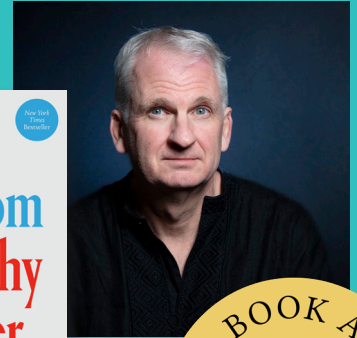
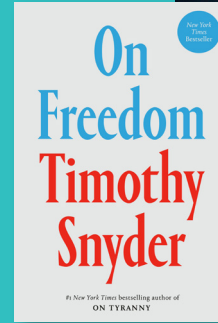
Nonfiction

WINNER *On Freedom*

Timothy Snyder

New York, NY: Crown, 2024.

A current resident of Toronto, Canada, *New York Times* bestselling author Timothy Snyder has roots in Dayton and Centerville, Ohio. *On Freedom* draws on the work of philosophers and political dissidents, conversations with contemporary thinkers, and Snyder's own experiences coming of age in a time of American exceptionalism to identify the practices, attitudes, and habits of mind that will help forge a future rooted in politics of abundance, generosity, and grace.



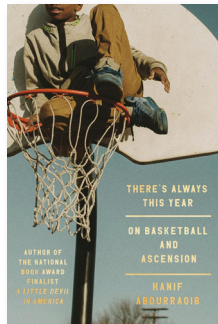
Finalists

There's Always This Year: On Basketball and Ascension

Hanif Abdurraqib

New York, NY: Random House, 2024.

Growing up in Columbus, Ohio, in the 1990s, *New York Times*-bestselling author Hanif Abdurraqib witnessed a golden era of basketball, one in which legends like LeBron James were forged—and countless others weren't. His lifelong love of the game leads Abdurraqib into an exploration of what it means to make it, who we think deserves success, and the very notion of role models.

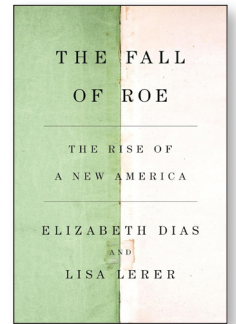


The Fall of Roe: The Rise of a New America

Elizabeth Dias & Lisa Lerer

New York, NY: Flatiron Books, 2024.

In June 2022, Americans watched in shock as the Supreme Court reversed one of the nation's landmark rulings. For nearly a half century, Roe was synonymous with women's rights and freedoms. Then, suddenly, it was gone. With expansive scope and unprecedented access to the ranks of conservative and liberal power, Ohioan Elizabeth Dias and Lisa Lerer chronicle the end of the Roe era.

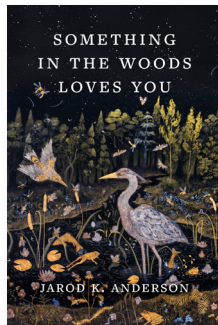


Something in the Woods Loves You

Jarod K. Anderson

New York, NY: Timber Press, 2024.

Bats can hear shapes, plants can eat light, and bees can dance maps. When his life took him to a dark place, poet and podcaster Jarod K. Anderson found comfort and redemption in these facts—and a shift in perspective. *Something in the Woods Loves You* tells the story of the darkest stretch of a young person's life, and how deliberate and meditative encounters with plants and animals helped him see the light at every turn.

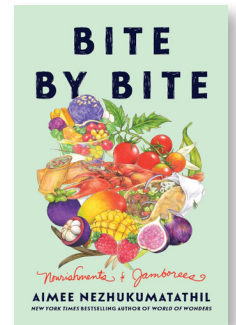


Bite by Bite: Nourishments and Jamborees

Aimee Nezhukumatathil

New York, NY: Ecco, 2024.

From *New York Times* bestselling poet and essayist Aimee Nezhukumatathil, *Bite by Bite* explores the way food and drink evoke our associations and remembrances. Through short essays paired with illustrations, this lyrical book offers a banquet of tastes, smells, memories, associations, and marvelous curiosities from nature.



Poetry

WINNER *Besaydoo: Poems*

Yalie Saweda Kamara

Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 2024.

Yalie Saweda Kamara is a Sierra Leonean-American poet, writer, educator, and researcher living in Cincinnati. Selected by Amaud Jamaul Johnson for the Jake Adam York Prize, Kamara's debut full-length poetry collection, *Besaydoo*, is an elegantly wrought love song to home—as place, as people, as body, and as language—drawing from her own multifaceted legacy in sharp relief.



Finalists

Blue Exodus

Hussain Ahmed

Asheville, NC: Orison Books, 2024.

Winner of the 2022 Orison Poetry Prize for pre-published work, *Blue Exodus*, the second full-length poetry collection by Hussain Ahmed, charts a heart's history of home, war, dispossession, and displacement. Populated by oceans and birds, as well as missiles and gun magazines, the lush poems carry both profound grief and unbreakable hope.

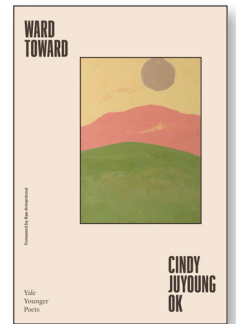


Ward Toward

Cindy Juyoung Ok

New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2024.

In the 118th volume of the Yale Series of Younger Poets, Cindy Juyoung Ok moves assuredly between spaces—from the psych ward to a prison cell, from divided countries to hospice wards. She plumbs these institutions of constraint, ward to ward, and the role of each reality's language, word to word, as she uncovers fractured private codes and shares them in argument, song, and prayer.

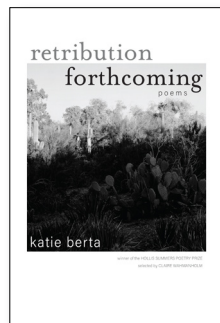


Retribution Forthcoming: Poems

Katie Berta

Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2024.

Retribution Forthcoming is an account of sexual assault and its aftermath, exploring how trauma interacts with belief and our ability to trust others—and ourselves. Through a blend of wit and candid examinations, Katie Berta reflects on selfhood, consciousness, and mortality as they intertwine with our identities and the way those identities are politicized.

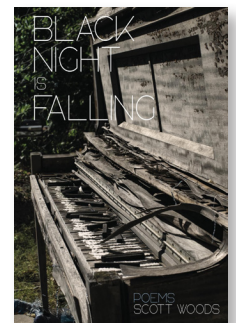


Black Night is Falling

Scott Woods

Mesa, AZ: Brick Cave Media, 2024.

Scott Woods' third book of poetry wrestles with ecstatic notions of blackness, the beauty and grief to be found in every 'hood carryout, the colonization of pumpkin spice, and backstage tales of the vaunted and mythical Cookout. At turns funny, fearlessly irreverent, and dark, Woods composes a love letter to the existential and emotional blues, gathering up all of the love and woe that can be held in the face of a world seemingly resigned to its own blues.



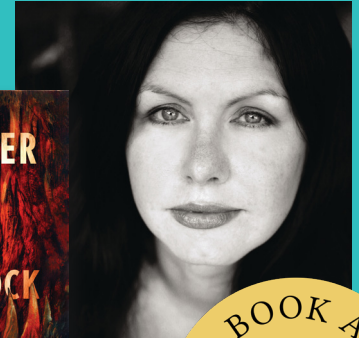
Young Adult

WINNER *Under This Red Rock*

Mindy McGinnis

New York, NY: Katherine Tegen Books, 2024.

Edgar Award–winning author Mindy McGinnis’ rural upbringing in Cardington, Ohio, is reflected in much of her writing. In *Under This Red Rock*, teen Neely Hawtrey takes a job as a tour guide in the local caverns. With a history of mental illness in her family and the suicide of her older brother on her mind, Neely finds herself drawn to her new coworker, Mila. But when Mila is found murdered, Neely becomes the number one suspect in this psychological thriller.



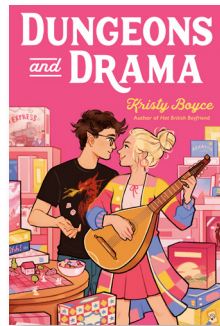
Finalists

Dungeons and Drama

Kristy Boyce

New York, NY: Delacorte Press, 2024.

When musical theater lover Riley Morris agreed to “fake date” Dungeons & Dragons gamer Nathan, she never guessed she would have so much fun—or that flirting with Nathan wouldn’t require as much acting as she thought it would. This YA romcom by *New York Times* bestselling–author Kristy Boyce is full of hijinks, humor, and heart.

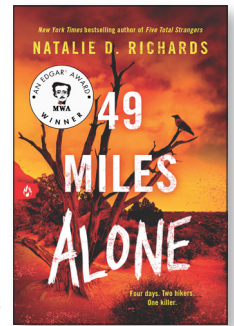


49 Miles Alone

Natalie D. Richards

Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks Fire, 2024.

A year ago, Katie and her cousin Aster survived a traumatic night. Desperate to heal and leave the past behind, they tackle a four-day hike in the Utah backcountry. But an illness, an injury, and a freak storm leave them short on confidence and supplies—and at the mercy of a disconcerting young couple they meet on the trail in this tense thriller from Edgar Award winning–author Natalie D. Richards.



Asking for a Friend

Kara H. L. Chen

New York, NY: Quill Tree Books, 2024.

Ambitious teen Juliana Zhao must team up with her childhood frenemy Garrett to start a dating advice column. The prize: winning the Asian Americans in Business Competition—and redeeming her family’s reputation in her small Taiwanese American community, where her older sister was disowned a few years prior. As Juliana argues with Garrett over how to solve everyone else’s love problems, she realizes she still has a lot to learn in this tender YA romcom.



Dust

Alison Stine

New York, NY: Wednesday Books, 2024.

Due to her parents’ fear of the dangerous influence of the outside world, partially-deaf teen Thea lives a sheltered life. When her parents are forced to allow her to work at a local café to help make ends meet, Thea begins to learn what she’s been missing—and starts questioning everything she thinks she knows about family, love, and her future in this haunting, speculative coming-of-age novel.



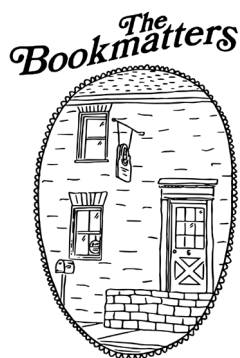
The Ohio Reading Challenge: How to Play

- Read books by Ohio authors and illustrators or books about Ohio topics to complete the bingo board reading challenges. (We recommend reading titles from the list of 2025 Ohio Book Award winners and finalists, but any book by an Ohio author or illustrator or book about Ohio is eligible.)
- You can find the challenge board on page 13, or download and print one from the Ohioana website at: <https://www.ohioana.org/programs/2025-ohio-reading-challenge/>
- Mark the completed squares on your bingo board. 5 in a row makes a bingo!
- When you're done, fill out your info and upload a photo of your board to: <https://survey.typeform.com/to/mWB5W8MR>
- Every bingo you complete qualifies for one entry. If you complete your entire board, you qualify for 12 entries. (This will be confirmed with your uploaded photo.)
- The challenge will take place from July 15, 2025, to September 15, 2025. Prize winners will be contacted by September 30, 2025.

Thank you to our local bookstore partners
for generously providing gift card prizes for the
2025 Ohio Reading Challenge!



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BOOKS**™





Ohio Reading CHALLENGE

An Ohio book with a one-word title	A book set in rural or Appalachian Ohio	A book by an Ohioan that was adapted into a movie or TV show	An Ohio book written by a female author	An Ohio book with a non-human character
An Ohio book published in the year you were born	An Ohio book written by an author of color	An Ohio book with a green cover	An Ohio book with a number in the title	An Ohio book with a character who is a detective
An Ohio book written by a LGBTQ+ author	A classic novel set in Ohio	FREE SPACE	An Ohio book with a blue cover	A book by an Ohio poet
A book by an Ohio indie author	An Ohio book with a love story	A fictional book set in Ohio's historic past	An Ohio book published in 2025	A nonfiction book about Ohio history
An Ohio book with a red cover	A book about an Ohio person or subject written by a non-Ohioan	A children's book by an Ohio author or illustrator	An Ohio book with a character who is an immigrant	A book set in an Ohio city

The Ohio Reading Challenge ends September 15, 2025. Don't forget to submit your board online at:
<https://www.ohioana.org/programs/2025-ohio-reading-challenge/>

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

Claudia Owusu, 2025 Walter Rumsey Marvin Grant Winner

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

with yearning for all those Teen Nights I never made it out to but heard the girls singing “my neck, my back (Lick It)–” as they clutched their bodies and felt for the cool spine of the skate rink floor, iridescent lights cutting across the soft stretch of vertebrae.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

in the beating of somebody's mama's mouth, except it was really Mina's mama's mouth because Mina snuck out with a crush, and I covered for her, and her mama was no nonsense, and the repeat calls between my parents and hers became the glimmering difference between me knowing better and doing better. I mean her mama was so angry, Mina could not go home that night; and for years, we joked about channeling the spirit of Rosemary, Mina's mama, who kept a good fist balled and had a scorpion tattoo on her upper arm.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

over the memory of flashing the fifth grade boys on cue, when no other girls did. We were standing in the hallway after school tutoring. I wore an old blue sports bra under my white polo uniform and the boys' look of indifference was the thing that stung as they turned back into a huddle, shoulders locked like an immovable wall. I didn't know what to expect, but afterwards, none of the girls said sorry, and I couldn't really fault them because we weren't homegirls. But then again, homegirl or not, I knew then, like I know now, that a word is a word, pinky promise, hand to heart, nevermind that we had only known each other through the first week of tutoring.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

in the mangled jaws of the sixth grade rumor mill 'cause I had never been to Victoria's Secret, and once asked a classmate how to figure out a bra size, and the classmate found the ask weird 'cause she wasn't a girl's girl, and turns out, neither was the entire sixth grade, so everyone whispered and side eyed me for weeks, until another

body got caught (finally), black and blue, in the cull of the rumor mill's red throat. And before that, at one point or another, I had debated sacrificing another body by making up a story I knew was untrue (so everyone could get off my back), but thank God for the short memory of middle school, and thank God for the winter break, which washed like a baptism in the river Lethe, the grace to be remade, again, into just another body.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

over the lore of bicycles and hymens, (*whispered* *bicycles and hymens*), which made every bump on the road a threat, even though it didn't really make no sense, and so once, I rode full speed under a cobalt sky, tumbled over sidewalks, somersaulted with no hands, kissed the heated asphalt, came home with a doubled upper lip and a knot in the shoulder blade—I was face to face then, head level set to the spreading concern of women.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

because the body is *shy*. The body is a lush field of shame plants. Touch the body and it folds. Touch the body and it turns its back.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

'cause once I think I got Toxic Shock Syndrome at the neighborhood pool. It was the last day of Vacation Bible School and the church van filed all the kids out with quick permission slips from parents—I forged mine 'cause the summer was so hot the water on my ankles felt like grace. I gleaned over the instructions on the tampon box because I was distracted by the hoard of girls in the two-stall bathroom, turning the sink area into a quick changing room, peeking their heads out to warn the boys, all high giggles and laughter; so I just took a chance, inserted the tampon with the outer barrel attached, and then, felt so dizzy afterwards like my arms were spools and I couldn't think straight. I didn't call for help or notify anyone because it was a private matter and they were all already in the pool, and the adults

were gathered heads at the end of a table, and so I stayed on the bathroom floor the whole time in my new green and white Aéropostale tank top and thrifted shorts, my bathing suit tied at my nape—maybe someone came to check on me, maybe I learned for the first time how easily the body betrays, how easily the body disappoints.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

over the orange-headed lizard that sprinted from the cement wall and crawled across my bare chest when I was eight. My cousins joked that my chest was soooo flat the lizard might have confused it with the concrete wall. What I remember most was that I had my shirt in hand, ready to throw it over my head. I felt the pointed feet (toes?) of the lizard scratch across my chest, and it was a simple thing, a small thing, but I was traumatized and cried, like shrieking-my-head-off cried, because of all places, my chest??? The wall was right there, and if not that, the ground.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

in the way blueberries are blue or starlings are blue or the way my next door neighbor, finding her husband a cheat, beat him black and blue. In the way the police came for her days later, in black and blue uniforms, and even though it was back when adults shielded our eyes from terrible things, we got to see it all, the nail bed of her index finger pulled back, his one gnarled tooth hanging by a fleshy thread, how they removed her at midnight so not to disturb the neighborhood, but in the morning, we saw blood splattered through dirt as the chickens crowed. I looked to the adults for some kind of reconciliation about marriage, or better yet about love, but no one wanted to speak on it, and instead avoided our eyes, assigning us chores to get us to leave the room.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

nurses a sweet tooth, condensed milk hard candy in which aunties and mothers warn will cause *odeepua*, fungus in the genitals.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

for that one time I left my half empty can of Coca Cola scorching for two hours on the school playground. I couldn't finish it during recess, so I set it down by the swings, watched it carefully from the classroom window as the teacher spun around with a cane during Mental. It might have been the first Coca Cola I had been permitted to pack with my lunch. I wanted to savor it. Drink to the very last drop, so finally, when school ended, I rushed back

to the swings, where the aluminum can burned hot to the touch. I palmed it with both hands. Closed my eyes and took a long sip, thirsty for the dark syrup, but tasting instead a sour stream of red ants, thrashing in my mouth and down my throat. It was nobody's fault so I could not cry. I just screamed, one for the pain, and two for the disappointment, which weighed the same in my little girl heart.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

from all those dum dums and blue icy popsicles I ate every summer as I lay horizontally musing over Judy Moody, and all that she's got going on. She was my girl in my head, and I had just read *The Not Bummer Summer*, so I forced my dad to buy a blow up pool for the backyard, where I at first tried to pump it with my mouth, and then later, air from an old bicycle pump. I swam every day uninterrupted in the surface level pool. Touched the circumference with every part of my body. Floated on my back and watched the day careen to a turquoise sunset. But alas, the story turned to heartbreak because one afternoon my brother ran over the pool with our dad's faulty lawn mower. I watched the air fizzle out slowly as I held a heap of towels, ready for a swim. He said sorry, but I still think he was a hater for that.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

shudders every time I hear "Grenade" by Bruno Mars because forreal that used to be my heart break song back when Sam Clark started acting brand new and avoided me in the eighth grade hallways. But on the last day of school, he walked with me hand in hand, and I wrote him a long-winded message on Facebook afterward, and all he responded with was "okay." Okay? -- :(((

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

with scissors in hand, trimming away permed bangs into blunt bangs, all in the smudgy mirror of the middle school bathroom. It was the age of Nicki Minaj's pink wigs, and thick bumped ends; and the *snip snip* of Sharday's school scissors left me with more split ends than I came with. The regret inched its way through my stomach during lunch and recess, but I felt better when I got home after I put curlers to it, and flipped some longer strands over the shorter strands to make it versatile, with bows and all.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

gets weak in the knees, word to SWV. We were seated in class or we were outside during a fire drill, baby phat coats wrapped like a veil around our growing bodies.

Demetriona threw her head back, lungs open to the crisp autumn air as she sang (off-key) *iiiiiii getttttt sooooooooo weaaaakkkk in the kneesss iiii cannnn hardly speakkkkk iiii loooseee allll controllllll anddd somethiiiiinnng taakkkesss overrrr meeee*—we joined in, a herd of scraggly birds, falling out of line, breaking the delicate seal of morning with our voices.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

with literal gentian violet on bruised knees because I have been chased by far too many things, at one point a dog, and then at others, men into dark alleyways. It's crazy, but I always keep a sharp thing in my pocket because my brother said anything is a weapon if you hold it right. I hold a Z-grip pen with my thumb locked and the rest of my fingers hooked, say what you want, but it works. It has to.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

over the seventh grade boys' jokes about dark skinned girls and how you can't see them with the lights off. *All you see is teeth*, they said, then dispersed down the hall like a gaggle of geese. I don't know who started the joke. But I remember, later, Fortez during math period, said I was pretty for a dark skinned girl, and I smiled, relishing in it, thinking myself some sort of an exception.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

at the fifth grade spelling bee when I misspelled *glucose*, and then cried in class because Ms. Dulay called me a cry baby when really I was just sulky and disappointed, and her calling me a cry baby made me actually cry, while the whole class laughed, and I think enough time has passed for me to call her a terrible teacher. Mina agrees.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

when Aaron Anderson calls me a bitch in newspaper class. *Whatchu gon' do, bitch? Whatchu gon' do, bitch?* He said more than once. Maybe three times, I think. I was so angry I picked up a chair and threw it at him. The chair was kinda heavy so I held it clumsily, and then let it fly. I remember the tenth graders rushing out of their classroom to see the fight, but truthfully, I blacked out or wanted to. And later, Principal Stevens tried to calm me in his office: *It was the bitch that got you, huh?* I remember I didn't have anything in my pocket then, so the chair was the next best thing.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

over first times and the morning after—the disappointed

gaze of the pharmacist or the shifting gaze of the pharmacist or I'm making it all up because of my own shame around where I was versus where I should have been, what I should have preserved versus what had been let go on a lonely night.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

'cause I am chock-full of apologies. Ones I am waiting to receive and ones I desperately owe myself.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

'cause I'm a hot girl with no romantic prospects and the Gynecologist lists abstinence on my report sheet, and my mother worries, swears by a guy I have never met, and I am a recluse now going into my late twenties, and maybe that is a shame, or maybe that is somebody else's lore, but still the body don't break.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

but that is still a breaking. See also: crack / See also: fracture / See also: rift / See also: breach.

Where the body don't break, still blacks & blues

with kept secrets because the body is mine is mine is mine is mine is mine.



Photo by Nana Kwadwo Agyei Addo

Claudia Owusu is a Ghana girl through and through. As a writer and filmmaker, her work divulges the nuance of Black girlhood through a personal and collective lens. Her writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *Ninth Letter*, *Bellingham Review*, *Indianapolis Review*, *Vogue*, *Narrative Northwest*, *Akoroko*, and *Brittle Paper*. Her films have screened internationally at Aesthetica, the New York African Film Festival, Urbanworld, and Blackstar Fest. She is the author of the chapbook *In These Bones I am Shifting* from Akashic Books. She holds an MFA in Creative Nonfiction at The Ohio State University.



OHIOana
LIBRARY

New Writers' Group & Workshop Series

Discover your voice amongst fellow writers with this
FREE group and series led by Diane Callahan



MORE INFO

 Ohioana Library, 274 E. First Ave

 RSVP at ohioana.org/programs/

MONDAYS

Starting Sept 15



TIME

6-8 pm



Ohio Goes to the Movies: A Conversation with Molly Kreuzman

By Kathryn Powers

Molly Kreuzman is the program director for Ohio Goes to the Movies and has been involved in the film industry for more than twenty-five years. Her past work encompasses creating and managing film festivals, producing and directing both narrative and documentary feature films, and restoring and managing historic theaters. We spoke with Kreuzman about the cast behind Ohio Goes to the Movies, the celebration plans for the United States Semiquincentennial, and Ohio's connections to the silver screen.

Q Can you tell us about Ohio Goes to the Movies and how the concept became part of America 250-Ohio's celebrations for the United States Semiquincentennial?

A Ohio Goes to the Movies was originally imagined by Stephen George during Ohio's Bicentennial in 2003. As George traveled across Ohio's eighty-eight counties, he observed how deeply communities cherished their film connections, whether it was a hometown actor or a local filming location. Though the idea wasn't realized then, it was revived for the 2026 Semiquincentennial. With strong support from Governor Mike DeWine and other state leaders, the concept was developed into a statewide celebration of Ohio's rich film history and future.

Q What are some of the silver screen experiences and programs movie lovers can look forward to in 2026?

A We're planning 250 days of Ohio-centric cinematic celebrations beginning February 11, 2026, at Thomas Edison's birthplace in Milan. Every corner of Ohio will have something special, from red carpet events and trivia nights to outdoor movie screenings and Q&As with filmmakers. Our venues range from historic and art house theaters to drive-ins, libraries, parks, and even swimming pools. And while 2026 is the big year, we're

building excitement in 2025 through previews, Ohio Goes to the Movies Literary Trail stops, and community engagement events.

Q The Ohio Movie Database is an impressive resource for information on Ohio's connections to the film industry, both historical and contemporary. How did this database come together? Were there any writers, actors, or movies that particularly surprised you with their Ohio affiliation?

A We launched the Ohio Movie Database as a foundational part of Ohio Goes to the Movies.

It's been both a research project with heavy lifting by Strategic Marketing Advisor Betty Weibel and her staff, and a community collaboration. Citizens from across the state have submitted incredible stories and facts we hadn't uncovered ourselves. Some of the most surprising connections include the sheer number of award-winning actors that have come from Ohio, and the founding of Hollywood itself by Daeida Wilcox Beveridge of Hicksville, Ohio. There

are also contemporary surprises, like recent Oscar-winning costume designer Paul Tazewell and Disney animator Mark Alan Henn, both with Ohio roots.

Q What is your favorite connection between literature and film in Ohio?

A So many powerful stories come from Ohio. That said, I'm always drawn to *The Shawshank Redemption* (based on Stephen King's novella "Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption," originally published in his collection *Different Seasons*), filmed at the Ohio State Reformatory in Mansfield and cast by Cincinnati's own D. Lynn Meyers. It's a cinematic treasure with enduring resonance and undeniable ties to Ohio's creative community.



Q Readers often have passionate opinions about the strengths and drawbacks between physical and digital books. What are the pros and cons of digital media and streaming services, and how have they affected the film industry?

A Digital platforms have democratized access to film and made it easier to discover both new and classic works. But they've also changed how films are funded, distributed, and even appreciated, sometimes prioritizing content quantity over cinematic craft. That's part of why Ohio Goes to the Movies focuses on shared, in-person viewing experiences. There's something powerful about watching a story unfold with others in a darkened theater—it turns a film into an event.

Q The Ohioana Library team enjoyed collaborating with Ohio Goes to the Movies and America 250-Ohio on the Ohio Goes to the Movies Literary Trail. (See more information about this unique journey around Ohio on page 20.) What are the top spots that you recommend movie fans visit on the Literary Trail?

A The Literary Trail is one of my favorite Ohio Goes to the Movies collaborations. Top spots include the Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Cincinnati, a nod to films adapted from her iconic novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; Dayton's Paul Laurence Dunbar House, which highlights an early African American literary voice whose influence is far-reaching; and the Cleveland Public Library, with its stunning architecture and deep collection of film and literary materials. Each stop on the Trail connects literature to film in meaningful ways.

Q Where can the community learn more about the programs and events coming soon to a city near them?

A The Ohio Goes to the Movies website is the best place to go to stay updated at ohiogoes to the movies.org. We also publish a digital monthly magazine. You can find all the issues on our website, or sign up for our mailing list and receive them directly in your email each month.

Q Lastly, what is your all-time favorite movie-watching snack?

A This might sound old school, but I can't resist freshly popped popcorn with a healthy dose of salt and then a big bottle of water! Classic and comforting, just like a great Ohio movie.



Photos: (Top) Molly Kreuzman, program director, Ohio Goes to the Movies. (Middle) The Ohio Movies Database cover art. (Bottom) The Murphy Theater in Wilmington, where Ben Stiller's *Nutcrackers* premiered. (Courtesy of OGTMM.)

From Page to Screen:

The Ohio Goes to the Movies Literary Trail

By Betty Weibel

The Ohio Goes to the Movies Literary Trail, presented by the Ohioana Library, shines a spotlight on Ohio authors in the film world. The new trail map is a spin-off of the Ohio Literary Trail, which was created in 2021. The Ohio Literary Trail celebrates Ohio's role in shaping culture and literature worldwide through seventy destinations and historical markers across the state. With the crossover of so many Ohio authors and books into the film world, the Ohio Goes to the Movies Literary Trail was a natural sequel to the original.

The new Trail is a joint project of Ohio Goes to the Movies, America 250-Ohio, and Ohioana. It features sites that visitors can see and visit such as museums, historic homes, libraries, and historic markers. The Ohio Goes to the Movies Literary Trail recognizes Ohio writers who are no longer with us, who created memorable work, and for whom there is a permanent destination for travelers to visit. For example, current author-illustrator Dav Pilkey from Cleveland—known for *Captain Underpants: The First Epic Movie* (2017) and *Dog Man* (2025), based on his bestselling graphic novels—is not featured on the Trail since he is still creating content for page and screen.

Some of the historic and influential writers included in the Trail are Pulitzer Prize-winner Toni Morrison from Lorain, whose novel *Beloved* was adapted for the big screen in 1998, and James Thurber from Columbus, author of the short story *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*, which inspired two film adaptations, an original in 1947 and remake in 2013. Mansfield's Louis Bromfield had multiple films based on his novels, including *The Rains*

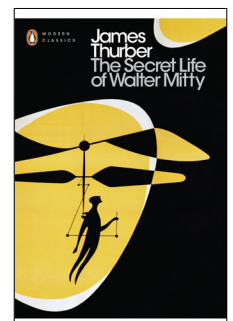
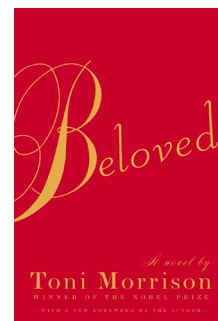
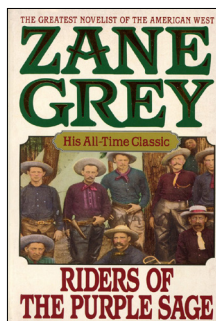
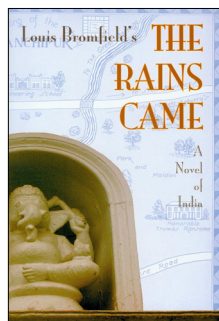
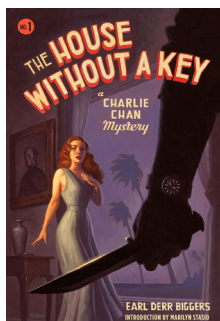
Came (1939), *Brigham Young* (1940), *It All Came True* (1940), and *Mrs. Parkington* (1944). Earl Derr Biggers from Warren authored the first six Charlie Chan novels, which were then made into films during the golden age of detective fiction. The Charlie Chan character, beloved by the public, appeared in nearly four dozen Hollywood films that were enjoyed by mystery fans around the globe. Zanesville's Zane Grey, known as the "Father of the Western," wrote the bestselling novel *Riders of the Purple Sage*, which was adapted for film five times since its publication in 1912—first in 1918 and most recently in 1996.

Organized by the state's five geographic regions for a convenient self-guided driving tour across twenty-seven sites, the Ohio Goes to the Movies Literary Trail encourages exploration by tourists planning a film-themed outing, as well as Ohioans who want to discover cinematic treasures they never knew existed in their own backyard.

Whether you prefer reading books, or watching movies, or visiting historical sites—or doing all three together!—the Ohio Goes to the Movies Literary Trail has something for everyone. As you load up the car for your next Ohio road trip, be sure to keep a copy of the Trail in your glovebox for a movie-themed literary adventure wherever you go.

For a digital version of the Trail map, visit: <https://www.ohioana.org/resources/ohio-goes-to-the-movies-trail>.

Photos: (Bottom) Ohio authors and books featured on the Ohio Goes to the Movies Literary Trail. (Right) Ohio Goes to the Movies Literary Trail map.



Ohio Goes to the Movies Literary Trail

Presented by Ohioana Library Association



The Ohio Goes to the Movies Literary Trail, presented by Ohioana Library, shines a spotlight on Ohio authors in the film world. For more on Ohio's contributions to movies visit ohiogestothemovies.org.

NORTHWEST OHIO

1. Clyde Historical Museum and Sherwood Anderson historical marker *The Last Soul on a Summer Night* (2009). Based on his book.
2. Toledo-Lucas County Public Library - Carolyn Keene Exhibit *Nancy Drew and the Hidden Staircase* (1939, 2019), *Nancy Drew* (2007). Based on her novels.
3. House of Four Pillars historical marker *Jennie Gerhart* (1933), *Carrie* (1952). Based on Theodore Dreiser's novels.

NORTHEAST OHIO

4. Malabar Farm and Louis Bromfield h. m.* *The Rains Came* (1939), *Brigham Young* (1940), *It All Came True* (1940), *Mrs. Parkington* (1944). Based on his novels.
5. Cleveland Hts. Library - Harvey Pekar *American Splendor* (2003). Based on his comic book series.
6. James Mercer Langston Hughes h. m.* *Way Down South* (1939).
7. Earl Derr Biggers films historical marker *The Black Camel* (1931). Creator of Detective Charlie Chan, based on his novels.
8. Leigh Brackett historical marker *Rio Bravo* (1959), and *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* (1980). Based on her stories and novels.
9. Toni Morrison Reading Room historical marker *Beloved* (1998). Based on her novel.
10. Home of Superman historical marker *Superman The Movie* (1978), *Superman II* (1980). Based on the comic book series.

CENTRAL OHIO

11. Thurber House Museum and James Thurber historical marker *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (1947, 2013), *The Male Animal* (1942). Based on his story and play, respectively.
12. Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute *Auntie Mame* (1958), *Inherit the Wind* (1960), *First Monday in October* (1981). Based on their plays.
13. Ohioana Library Association Visit Ohioana.org to visit and see some of these works in the collection.
14. Dawn Powell historical marker *Hello Sister* (1933), *Man of Iron* (1935). Based on her plays.

SOUTHWEST OHIO

15. Harriet Beecher Stowe House h. m.* *Topsy and Eva* (1927), *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1927). Based on her novel.
16. Paul Laurence Dunbar House h. m.* *Paul Laurence Dunbar: Beyond the Mask* (2018), *Paul Laurence Dunbar: An American Poet* (2021).
17. Erma Bombeck historical marker *The Grass is Always Greener* (1978). Based on Erma Bombeck's novel.
18. Milton Caniff historical marker *Terry and the Pirates* (1940). Based on his comic series.
19. Virginia Hamilton historical marker *The Planet of Junior Brown* (1997), *The House of Dies Drear* (1984). Based on her novels.
20. Robert McCloskey Museum *The Donuts* (1963), *Burt Dow-Deep Water Man* (1983). Based on his books.
21. Lowell Thomas / Garst Museum *The Blonde Captive* (1931).
22. Ulysses S. Grant sites. Numerous films based on his book, *Personal Memoir of Ulysses S. Grant* (1885).
23. Rod Serling historical marker coming 2025! *Patterns* (1956), *Saddle the Wind* (1958), *Requiem for a Heavyweight* (1962), *Seven Days in May* (1963), *Planet of the Apes* (1968).

Note: Map markers are not exact locations.

SOUTHEAST OHIO

24. Zane Grey and National Road Museum *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1918, 1925, 1931, 1941, 1996), *The Vanishing American* (1955). Based on his novels.
25. Grandma Gatewood Trail Subject of film: *Trail Magic: The Grandma Gatewood Story* (2015).
26. Ambrose Bierce historical marker *Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge* (1961), *The Damned Thing is of Such a Color* (2020). Based on his short stories.
27. William Dean Howells historical marker *Christmas Every Day* (1986).

* Historical Marker is noted as "h. m."

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The Rod Serling Historical Marker: Join the Dedication on October 2, 2025

By Betty Weibel

On October 2, 2025, Antioch College in Yellow Springs will unveil a new Ohio Historical Marker on campus to honor renowned alumnus Rodman Edward Serling. The screenwriter and producer was known as a pioneer of television and creator of *The Twilight Zone* television series.

Serling enrolled at Antioch College in 1946 following military service in World War II. He began college as a physical education major, but discovered writing as a way of working through his war experiences, shifting his studies to language and literature. Through Antioch College's distinctive cooperative education program, Serling had his first experiences in broadcasting and credited the institution as the place where he learned to write and think, saying in a 1962 interview, "It has always been a place of dissent, but I think of wholesome dissent . . . This is what I learned at Antioch, that when something was wrong, I could get up on my own two feet and make comment on it."

During his time at Antioch, the young writer contributed short fiction to the campus literary magazine, *The Antiochian*. He married classmate and Columbus-native

Carolyn "Carol" Kramer in 1948, and managed the student-run Antioch Broadcasting System, where he wrote and produced award-winning radio dramas. After graduation in 1950, Serling got his first media job at Cincinnati's WLW radio. He started selling scripts to national networks while living in Cincinnati, ultimately spending eight years in Ohio. Following the third season of *The Twilight Zone*, he returned to Antioch to teach writing in 1963.

Serling is best known as the creator and host of *The Twilight Zone*, the landmark 1959-64 fantasy anthology series for which he was also the principal writer (penning or coauthoring ninety-two of the influential show's 156 episodes). Serling's versatile writing was honored with six Emmy awards, three of which he received before *The Twilight Zone's* creation. He wrote some of the most acclaimed scripts during television's golden age of live drama, including "Patterns" and "Requiem for a Heavyweight." His writing was marked with a profound understanding of human nature and a strong sense of social justice, frequently addressing issues and themes such as prejudice, scapegoating, authoritarian dangers, greed, and how we treat children and the elderly.

Serling's intimate connection to Antioch College, and his profound impact on society and culture as a writer from the Buckeye State, will be memorialized with the new two-sided historical marker. One side will focus on Serling's time at Antioch College, as well as his early Ohio connections and work in radio. The other side will center on his role as a pioneer of television and his many contributions to the industry.

The process of planning, submitting applications, and finalizing the Rod Serling historical marker spanned two years. The two-sided marker is now in the last stages of production at Sewah Studios in Marietta, Ohio, where all Ohio historical markers are produced.

(Left) Mockup design of the new Rod Serling Ohio Historical Marker.



The October 2 festivities at Antioch College will start with the Rod Serling Ohio Historical Marker dedication ceremony at 4:00 p.m. at One Morgan Place. This ceremony is free and open to the public.

Following the marker dedication, the celebrations will continue as the Yellow Springs Film Festival honors Rod Serling with its Opening Ceremony: A Tribute to Rod Serling. Doors open for this pre-purchase ticketed event at 6:30 p.m. at the Foundry Theater on the Antioch campus. The show will begin at 7:30 p.m. and include:

- Presentations from authors Anne Serling, Rod's daughter, and Ohioan Mark Dawidziak
- Performance of a Serling radio play
- Screening of a classic *Twilight Zone* episode and a panel discussion with Anne Serling, Mark Dawidziak, and John Kiesewetter

There will be a cash bar, and light food will be served. A limited number of tickets are available for pre-purchase for \$25 here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ysff-opening-ceremony-a-tribute-to-rod-serling-tickets-1501278156379>.



(Above) Finishing touches are hand-applied to a marker in the Sewah paint shop. (Courtesy of Ohio History Connection/Andy Verhoff.)

The Serling historical marker is a joint effort of the Ohioana Library Association, Antioch College, Yellow Springs Film Festival, Rod's daughter, Anne Serling, and Mark Dawidziak from the Serling Foundation. The Ohio Historical Marker program is administered by the Ohio History Connection. Since 1957, the program has placed more than 1,700 markers that share Ohio's history. The markers are catalogued on remarkableohio.org.

FEATURED PANELISTS



Anne Serling is the author of *As I Knew Him: My Dad, Rod Serling*, which won the Killer Nashville Silver Falchion Award for best memoir/biography in 2015. The adaptations she wrote of two of her father's teleplays were published in the anthology *The Twilight Zone: The Original Stories*. She has published poetry in *The Cornell Daily Sun* and *Visions*, and articles in *The Huffington Post*, *Salon.com*, and literary journals. She is currently working on a novel.



Mark Dawidziak is the author or editor of 25 books, including *Everything I Need to Know I Learned in The Twilight Zone* and the *USA Today* national bestseller *A Mystery of Mysteries: The Death and Life of Edgar Allan Poe*, which was nominated for Edgar, Agatha, Anthony, and Ohioana awards. Dawidziak is also an internationally-recognized Mark Twain scholar and five of his books are about the iconic American writer.



John Kiesewetter has covered broadcasting for forty years for the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Cincinnati Public Radio's WVXU-FM, and wvxu.org. He has written many stories about Rod Serling starting his career at Cincinnati's WLW radio and television. In 2020, he produced a radio adaptation on WVXU-FM of Serling's "O'Toole From Moscow," a one-hour TV comedy broadcast live on NBC in 1955 about confusion between Russians and the Cincinnati Reds at the height of the "Red Scare."

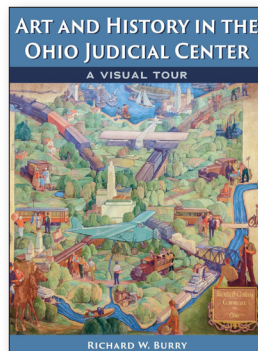
Book Reviews

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in book reviews are solely the reviewers' and do not reflect the opinions or beliefs of the Ohioana Library Association.

NONFICTION

Burphy, Richard W. *Art and History in the Ohio Judicial Center: A Visual Tour*. Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2023.

This magnificent pictorial history showcases the Thomas J. Moyer Ohio Judicial Center, formerly known as the Ohio Departments Building, among several other names. Built in 1933, the building is a work of art inside and out. From its architecture to its paintings and imagery, the Center is a wonderful example of Art Deco and Works Progress Administration (WPA) buildings.



Author Richard W. Burry takes readers on a tour of this iconic fifteen-story building nestled on the eastern bank of the Scioto River as it meanders through downtown Columbus. Once the home of both the State Library of Ohio and the Ohioana Library Association, the building now houses the Ohio Supreme Court, its offices, chambers, courtrooms, and library. Its shining white marble sets it apart as a government building.

Burry's meticulous research led him through archives, historical records, blueprints, and news articles to find information on the craftsmen, painters, architects and builders who shaped this impressive building and all the decorative arts within it. Color photographs and drawings are accompanied by narrative text that explains the history and background of each feature or item. Readers learn about the design work and minute details of every nook and cranny of the building

including the floors, walls, ceilings, staircases, handrails, elevators, and even the air grills.

Once you read this book and take in the beauty of every page, you'll want to visit the Ohio Judicial Center to see the art, bas-reliefs, metalwork, and sculptures yourself. Fortunately, visitors can walk around the institution's perimeters to see many architectural features before they even venture inside. Once within its walls, guests can partake in self-guided tours during open hours or schedule a guided tour in advance.

This intricate book is perfect for anyone who loves Ohio history and stunning architecture.

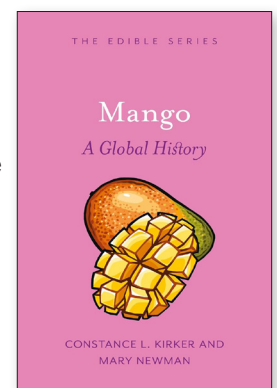
Richard W. Burry is an architectural photographer who works with historic preservation organizations throughout Ohio. Three of his photographs are on permanent display in the Ohio Statehouse, just two blocks from the Ohio Judicial Center.

REVIEWED BY MIRIAM KAHN, LIBRARIAN, COLUMBUS, OH

Kirker, Constance L., & Mary Newman. *Mango: A Global History*. London, UK: Reaktion Books, 2024.

Mango: A Global History is another fascinating book in The Edible Series published by Reaktion Books. Constance L. Kirker and Mary Newman provide a wealth of information about mangos in their most recent publication.

There is more to the mango than meets the eye when you see it sitting in the produce section of your grocery store. Its history dates back to over sixty million years ago, with fossilized leaves being found in northeast India. India continues to be the world's largest mango producer today. China is another top producer, and is the largest consumer of mangos. While the mango's history is strong in Asian countries, it is also now cultivated in other areas of the world. The



Philippines claim the mango as their national fruit. The United States has limited areas of mango production, primarily growing crops in California, Hawaii, Florida, and Puerto Rico. Ninety-nine percent of the mangos sold in America are imported from countries further south including Mexico, Ecuador, Brazil, and the Central America region.

While Kirker and Newman present many interesting facts about mangos, they also include sections about the importance of the fruit in history, health, and the arts. Some of George Washington's documents note the importation of mangos to colonial America. The fruit was preserved for long voyages through different forms of pickling, such as with jams or chutneys. The Ploughman's Lunch, a favorite in the United Kingdom comprised of a cheese and pickle (chutney) sandwich, often includes chutney made with mangos. In the United States, the native pawpaw fruit is sometimes referred to as the "Hillbilly mango." I was also amazed to discover the mango's status as a superfood. Mangos help reduce the risk of heart disease, are rich in many important vitamins and minerals, and full of antioxidants that may prevent damage to the eyes from macular degeneration. In the art world, mangos were incorporated into the paisley design pattern. Artist Paul Gauguin often included mangos in his paintings, with his subjects holding them. The mango also appears in many community events, with festivals throughout the world honoring this tropical fruit.

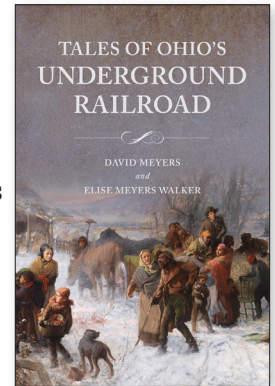
After learning all of this interesting and healthy information about the mango, I have started to buy them at the grocery store. While the skin color does not indicate the ripeness, I am experimenting with how to select the best flavored mango. With the recipes included in the back of *Mango: A Global History*, there are many ways to incorporate the fruit into meals. I have particularly enjoyed the mango chutney recipe.

If you are interested in learning about foods—especially their history and health connections—*Mango: A Global History* is a fun book to read to gain both knowledge and new recipes. Bon appétit!

REVIEWED BY CHARLOTTE L. STIVERSON, EDUCATOR,
RETIRED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER, AND CHILDREN'S
BOOK AUTHOR

Meyers, David, and Elise Meyers Walker.
Tales of Ohio's Underground Railroad.
Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2025.

Most native Ohioans have probably grown up with stories of the Underground Railroad, of where it touched our neighborhoods or local personalities who were conductors or passengers. Indeed, as an outpost or as hidden thoroughfare, the network of secret meeting places and passageways reached every corner of the state.



Ohio's may have been the busiest sector in the country for the sprawling web of hideaways and escape routes that guided many of the 20,000 to 100,000 slaves fleeing the South for freedom, and yet what Ohio experienced was in its own way a microcosm of the fraying of pre-Civil War America.

Into this, we welcome David Meyers and Elise Meyers Walker, father and daughter historians, and their latest book, *Tales of Ohio's Underground Railroad*, an exploration of the period from the 1840s into Reconstruction with the network of abolitionists and combatants who simultaneously turned the state into a pathway to freedom and a hunting ground.

If the book seems complicated, it's because the economic and political dynamics of Ohio in the pre-Civil War years were complicated. Ohio was a free state. Abolitionists, as well as former slaveowners who moved to southern Ohio, were urging slaves from Kentucky, Virginia, and states further south to escape. At the same time, Congress enacted the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, which unleashed a small army of bounty hunters and kidnappers searching for runaway slaves who had been encouraged to flee to Canada and freedom via Ohio.

The book is especially valuable for those already familiar with the Underground Railroad saga (thank you, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and Colson Whitehead). Authors Meyers and Meyers Walker themselves have a firm foundation, having earlier written two related books, *The Reverse Underground Railroad in Ohio* and *Historic Black Settlements of Ohio*.

What makes the book special are the nuggets that survive the authors' scrutiny as they unravel myths, hyperbole, and falsehoods that have persisted for nearly two centuries. They detail slaves' escapes and some of the tricks and deceit utilized by slaves and slave hunters, and present new stories behind such standards as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and the song "Darling Nelly Gray."

Consider Milton Clarke and Oberlin colleagues who outwitted slave hunters and a local lawyer trying to recapture a group of seven fugitive slaves—six men and one woman in 1842. As the fugitives fled Oberlin for Lake Erie, a group of six Oberlin black men, disguised as slaves, and Clarke, dressed as a woman, took a carriage in an opposite direction. Soon seized, the seven were returned to the local justice of the peace who ruled that their capture and imprisonment were legal. At that point, the seven, including Clarke, shed their disguises and revealed their true identities as local Oberlin residents. Meanwhile, according to Clarke, the real slaves were heading to Canada "sailing on the waters of the blue lake."

Another example: Barker Jackson was a slave owned by Franklin Pierce's Vice President, William R. King of Alabama. Jackson escaped to Cincinnati and worked as a barber for several years before he was recaptured and returned to Alabama. There, Jackson married the light-skinned daughter of King's brother. In 1853, they decided to return to Cincinnati with Jackson disguised as his wife's slave, "Sal," for the trip. In Cincinnati, he met with Levi Coffin, the unofficial president of the Underground Railroad, who recognized Jackson from his barbershop days. Coffin suggested Jackson relocate to Cleveland where he would not be so recognizable. Jackson and his wife followed the advice, opened a barbershop in Cleveland, and made their home there.

The authors' authenticity scope has a wide swath. These and the other nuggets, the heart of the book, make *Tales of Ohio's Underground Railroad* a useful addition to your Civil War library shelf.

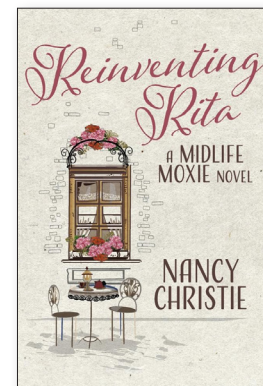
JIM TOEDTMAN IS THE RETIRED EDITOR OF THE AARP BULLETIN, EDITOR OF THE BALTIMORE NEWS-AMERICAN, MANAGING EDITOR OF NEWSDAY, AND EXECUTIVE EDITOR OF THE BOSTON HERALD AMERICAN. HE SHARED THREE PULITZER PRIZES AS A REPORTER AND EDITOR AT NEWSDAY AND WROTE A CHAPTER ABOUT HIS OHIO CHILDHOOD IN THE COLLECTION *GOOD ROOTS*.

FICTION

Christie, Nancy. *Reinventing Rita* (Midlife Moxie #1). Youngstown, OH: Nancy Christie, 2023.

Ohio author Nancy Christie adds heart, determination, and gumption to this tale about "starting over."

Rita is fifty, loves to bake, and shares her yummy creations with friends and coworkers. She's divorced and works at a store called Design2Go to make ends meet while her son, Zack, is away at college in Cincinnati. Rita's ex-husband has moved on, and even her own mother has a busier social life than she does. She's a grade-A worrier and glass-half-empty sort of person, but at least she has Zack's summer break to look forward to, when her son will be living at home again.



When Zack decides he'd rather spend his summer overseas with his new girlfriend and Rita's livelihood is threatened with Design2Go's dwindling business, the middle-aged woman finds herself at a crossroads: does she continue on in her rut, or can she find her courage to use this opportunity to reinvent herself?

Fortunately, being in the right place at the right time—and in the right mindset—provides a serious boost to Rita's self-confidence. A chance to teach a six-week baking class reignites Rita's almost-forgotten dream of becoming a professional baker. With the help of her friends, Rita is pushed—and pushes herself—to showcase her skills. Even a summer without her son at home feels less miserable. Maybe she can even find a way to use her baking to help save Design2Go from going out of business.

Readers will root for Rita as she finds her moxie and gets her feet under herself. The only thing missing from this uplifting tale are recipes for Rita's baking concoctions.

Reinventing Rita is Nancy Christie's debut novel. It won the 2023 International Firebird Book Award, was the Bronze award winner in the 2023 Royal Palm Literary

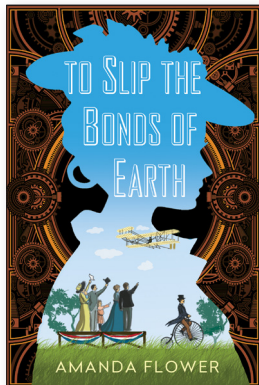
Awards (RPLA) competition, a finalist for women's fiction in the 2023 N. N. Light Book Awards, and a semi-finalist in the 2023 Kindle Book Awards. Christie has also published nonfiction, essays, and numerous short stories, and hosts the podcast, "Living the Writing Life."

REVIEWED BY MIRIAM KAHN, LIBRARIAN, COLUMBUS, OH

Flower, Amanda. *To Slip the Bonds of Earth* (A Katharine Wright Mystery).

New York, NY: Kensington, 2024.

How does a plane take off? It involves the opposing forces of lift, weight, gravity, and thrust. In the murder mystery novel *To Slip the Bonds of Earth* by Amanda Flower, the Wright brothers' sister, Katharine, pursues opposing forces to solve a crime.



The book begins just after Orville and Wilbur have made their historic flight at Kitty Hawk and returned home for Christmas. Katharine and their father, Bishop Milton Wright, are happy to have the brothers back home in Dayton, Ohio. Katharine, an English and Latin teacher at Steele High School, is glad they are home. While they were gone, she taught school, managed the house, took care of their father, and worked as an executive secretary, checking the sales and orders at the Wright's bicycle shop.

Katharine, educated and intelligent, is serious about her many responsibilities. The story takes off when her friend, Agnes Osborn, convinces Katharine to come with her to the Shaw family's Christmas party. Agnes' ulterior motive to attend the party is to see Arthur Bacon, the man she loves and wants to marry. Katharine goes to support her friend and uses the opportunity to speak to Mrs. Shaw about her son Benny, who was rude to her in class. Katharine also persuades her shy brother Orville to go with them to the party.

Orville does not care for parties. He brings Wilbur's notes on their airplane patent with him, intending to sneak off to find a quiet room to review them. In addition to the notes, he also has a letter opener in his pocket. When Orville is goaded into playing party games, he

removes his jacket. Unfortunately, after the games end, his jacket goes missing and he enlists Katharine's help to search the house for it. They eventually find it in the library, neatly folded but without Wilbur's notes inside. They also discover the bloody body of Herman Wheeler, stabbed with Orville's letter opener.

The mystery takes Katharine across turn-of-the-century Dayton, including the respected Gem City Club. The establishment is the epitome of wealth, refinement, business, and industry, with Mr. Shaw as the club president. Everyone knows their place in the hierarchy of society: servants, workers, women, and men. But as Katharine learns, all is not what it seems.

Ohio author Amanda Flower brings her readers on a fascinating journey as Katharine Wright takes flight, solving her first crime. *To Slip the Bonds of Earth* is the Readers' Choice Award winner and a finalist in the fiction category for the 2025 Ohio Book Awards.

KATHLEEN M. BUTTERMORE LIVES IN CANTON, OHIO, AND IS A RETIRED ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH FROM WALSH UNIVERSITY

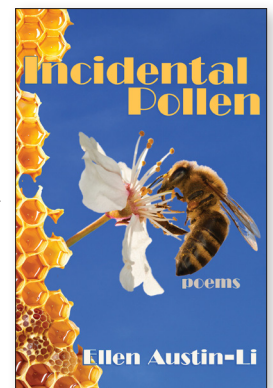
POETRY

Austin-Li, Ellen. *Incidental Pollen: Poems*.

Lake Dallas, TX: Madville Publishing, 2025.

"I drive ten-hour stretches on interstates / to chase this place called home, but home shrinks away," writes Cincinnati poet Ellen Austin-Li in *Incidental Pollen*, the author's first full-length poetry collection.

Like a honeybee venturing out and returning to the hive, poems take flight through time and space, circle back to loved places and loved ones—essential touchstones. Austin-Li explores childhood in the sylvan green of the Adirondacks, "my dream- / scape, these woods," then young adulthood in distant settings, and eventually Cincinnati, where Austin-Li settled down with her soon-to-be husband, trading "clambakes" for "barbecue." Austin-Li writes, "Cue the sons, / because where your babies are born becomes / home."



Driving back to New York for funeral after funeral, Austin-Li notes the passing of her father and her nephew in tender elegies. To her sister, devastated by the loss of her son, Austin-Li writes: “My sister, heart of my childhood, / . . . the one / who tossed my pillow downstairs at bedtime / amidst gales of giggles . . . / I lament the loss / of your easy laugh.” Insights deepen through use of poetic form: sonnet, pantoum, ekphrasis, and the palindrome, a poem that mirrors itself, a reflection of how Austin-Li creates (poetic) space to find a way to be present with loved ones who have passed away. Another poem, “Reverse Flip (for Jeffery),” powerfully confronts time, as Austin-Li reverses/ undoes the events that led to her nephew’s fatal car crash: “my phone lies silent / at 2:30 in the morning, / no reason to hear your brother’s voice / falter . . .”

Throughout the book, with a non-romanticized connection to the natural world reminiscent of poet Maxine Kumin, Austin-Li provides insights gleaned from beekeeping; this allows the poet to explore her life as it echoes with the life cycle of the hive. Poems include “Undertaker Bees,” “Two Queens” (one “virgin,” one “spent”), “Robber Bees,” and “Nurses,” bees who “visit often, examine / larvae deprived of food, give more / to those who signal the most distress.”

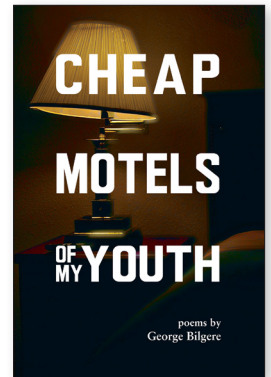
The title poem, “Incidental Pollen,” references unintentionally gathered particles that hold to the bee in its journey from flower to hive. A vivid image from “Wound City Diptych” revisits this idea. Austin-Li reveals how, as a critical care nurse at her shift’s end, she was able to “map the bloodstains remaining on my clothes.”

Incidental Pollen was a 2023 TRIO Award finalist, 2024 Wisconsin Poetry Series semi-finalist, and runner-up for the Arthur Smith Award. The poems are emotionally honest, beautifully crafted, elegiac, and resilient, gaining insights as they intuit links between the journey of the poet and the complex lives of honeybees, who “reenter the hive / in sharp diagonals . . . legs golden with furry pockets of pollen.” For Austin-Li, “Wherever I’ve lived / the same red bricks as my childhood. / The farther away I moved, the more / the wall encircled.” Austin-Li writes, “We inherited the longing for home / without being told.” Who we love and what we connect with has staying power. It can hold to us. It can call us home.

BONNIE PROUDFOOT’S FICTION, POETRY, REVIEWS, AND ESSAYS HAVE APPEARED IN JOURNALS AND ANTHOLOGIES INCLUDING *SWIM*, *RATTLE*, AND *THE NEW OHIO REVIEW*, AND HAVE BEEN NOMINATED FOR BEST OF THE NET AND THE PUSHCART. HER NOVEL *GOSHEN ROAD* (OU PRESS) RECEIVED THE WCONA BOOK OF THE YEAR AND WAS LONGLISTED FOR THE PEN/HEMINGWAY. *HOUSEHOLD GODS*, A POETRY CHAPBOOK, WAS PUBLISHED BY SHEILA-NA-GIG EDITIONS. A FULL-LENGTH POETRY COLLECTION, *INCOMER*, IS FORTHCOMING FROM SHADELANDHOUSE MODERN PRESS.

Bilgere, George. *Cheap Motels of My Youth*.
Studio City, CA: Rattle, 2024.

I first met George Bilgere while working at the Ohioana Library. He and Annie Wright, widow of the late Ohio poet James Wright, were both being honored at the 2006 Ohioana Awards ceremony. Annie received her award first. Then, when it was his turn, George came to the podium, gave a short, warm thanks, turned to Annie Wright, and began to describe the influence her husband’s work had had on his own. Then, in one of the most moving tributes I’ve ever seen, he began to recite Wright’s “Autumn Begins in Martin’s Ferry, Ohio” from memory.



So, it’s no surprise that I find Bilgere’s poetry moving—and funny. Bilgere belongs to a group of poets that includes Billy Collins, Mark Halliday, Tony Hoagland, William Matthews, and at times Ted Kooser and William Stafford. They all draw insight and humor from what is ostensibly a white male, middle-class existence that, thanks to the last thirty or so years of economic upheaval, is quickly disappearing.

Bilgere’s latest collection, a chapbook that captures the angst of getting older, also captures “funny.” The title poem of the collection finds the poet reading signs and billboards that list amenities offered by roadside motels, “Color TV. Free HBO. Hang Yourself / in Our Spacious Closets.” In “Insult to Injury,” he finds “an old air gun / and a can of ammo” along with “a volume of poetry, slim / but not slim enough / by a poet I never liked.” Wanting to see if “the damn thing still works,” he props the book against a wall and shoots it with the air gun. He then notes, “The pellet, as it happens, made it farther than I ever did, / stopping on page sixty-two . . .”

Several of the poems, though, carry the weight of growing older, and thus are often more poignant than humorous. “Market Basket” finds the speaker learning that the grocery store where he held his first job, where his mother shopped for forty years, and where he first asked a girl for a date has been “demolished / in a single day.” Gone are the meats and pickles, the freezer aisle, the racks of candy, the Coke machine. Even “the ancient palomino rocking horse, where for a nickel / the children of our town galloped / through their childhood / has galloped away.”

Many things—bicycles, grocery stores, memories, parents—gallop away in this slim chapbook. The poem “Misting” recognizes that “each day brings more bad weather / which is another way of saying / I’m in my sixties.” But all is not death and doom; there’s a wife, two sons, a steady teaching job, and even the integrity to deflect the flirtations of a “Kristin / or Morgan” in his poetry class. Some things—and people—get better with age.

KATE FOX IS THE AUTHOR OF *THE COMPANY MISERY LOVES*, A POETRY COLLECTION PUBLISHED BY SHEILA-NA-GIG EDITIONS. FORMERLY THE EDITOR OF THE *OHIOANA QUARTERLY*, SHE NOW LIVES IN ATHENS, OHIO, WITH HER PARTNER, BOB DEMOTT, AND THEIR TWO ENGLISH SETTERS, KATIE AND PATCH.

Santer, Rikki. *Zebra Lashes*.

Newberg, OR: Fernwood Press, 2024.

Zebra Lashes is an apt title for Rikki Santer’s latest collection of poetry, published in 2024. From the beginning, it brings to mind the duality of black and white stripes, the beauty and fragility of something as mundane—yet uncommon—as a zebra’s eyelashes. Once again, Santer uses her poetry to inhabit and bring to life the in-between, the gray, in a world where nothing is truly black and white. For Santer, “my story straddles the in-between” (“Trace Decay”), and this collection captures that from the cover image to the final line.

As always, Rikki Santer is a master wordsmith, and it is her vocabulary and unique ability to use language in creating imagery that brings these poems to life. She starts the poem “Morning Collage” by saying, “This

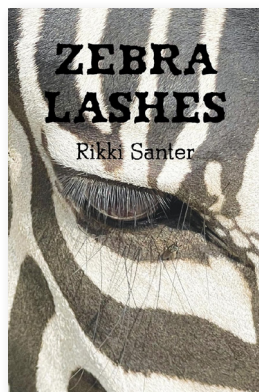
poem passes through wheels of color / little tom-toms of blues and reds and purples,” using a physical sense of color to connect to the emotion of “my early morning mind / that lets out plenty of kite string” to obsessive, anxious thoughts. In “Some Things I Encountered While Conversing,” she vividly describes how “His penumbra / wrapped around me / like a boa” and shares the wisdom that “Semi-colons / evaporate faster / than ghosts”; and in these phrases, I instinctively understand the emotions she conveys.

But Santer’s use of language is not the only thing that makes *Zebra Lashes* stand out. Santer explores a range of subjects, including tackling issues of ecocriticism and environmentalism in the first section, “From the Gecko,” where the perspectives and voices of animals ask us to reckon with our human impact on the natural world. Throughout the collection, there is a sense of intimacy, humanity, and family; in particular, the constant ebb and flow of relationships as people grow and change, as we can no longer parent our children in the same ways and must adapt to caring for our own parents. “Evergreen” asks questions about being raised by nature and our reciprocity with Mother Nature, whereas other poems in the section “Furrowed Brow” examine our human relationships. Santer’s references throughout the collection, especially to tarot, infuse it with a sense of Ohio-ness, so that seemingly-unrelated poems still feel at home next to each other.

With the rich language and subtle references that pervade *Zebra Lashes*, this collection rewards the reader who takes the time to sit with these poems. Santer uses a range of poetic forms—from golden shovels to mirror poems, from structured stanzas to stream of consciousness—and plays with formatting on the page, making every poem feel unique. It is a collection that grapples with this modern world and what it means to be human, touching on politicization, bodily autonomy, and state violence without overwhelming the reader. *Zebra Lashes* invites you to dig deeper—into yourself, into Santer’s language and her stories, and into your role in the world.

Zebra Lashes is Santer’s thirteenth published collection of poetry. Rikki Santer was the 2023 Ohio Poet of the Year.

CHARLOTTE HOUGHTON IS A PUBLIC LIBRARIAN IN THE COLUMBUS METRO AREA



MIDDLE GRADE

Ebbeler, Jeffrey. *Jerry, Let Me See the Moon*.
New York, NY: Holiday House, 2024.

Jerry, Let Me See the Moon is an awesome book by Ohio author and illustrator Jeffrey Ebbeler. It is about a boy named Jerry who moves to a new town. When the full moon rises at night, everyone in town transforms into animals!



One reason I think this book is cool is the humor. An example is the guard Otto Shepherd (mainly known as Shep) who is super funny and sometimes acts like a dog. This is what he turns into under the full moon. Another reason I like this book is that there are lots of pictures that are really good and they match the story well. When night comes only one thing happens in town—craziness! The were-people follow the instincts of their animal form. The were-lions hunt and the were-mosquitoes try to drink blood. In the end, Jerry and his friends save the day—and the night! This book has action, animals, and a bit of mystery.

Jeffrey Ebbeler has other great books, too, like the Scout Moore, Junior Ranger series. They are about a girl who loves the National Parks.

I'M COLLIN CANTERBURY AND I GO TO GRANBY ELEMENTARY IN WORTHINGTON. I'M TEN YEARS OLD AND I LIKE TO READ, WRITE IN PIXEL WRITING, AND PLAY WITH LEGOS.

Subity, Sam. *Valor Wings*.
New York, NY: Scholastic Press, 2024.

In *Valor Wings*, Sam Subity delivers a high-quality, engaging Middle Grade novel with compelling characters, exciting action, relatable friendships, big-picture historical accuracy, and really cool dragons.

Valor Wings tells the story of the Evacuation of Normandy in 1940 from several perspectives. We first meet Iris, a young girl living on her family's farm, and her friend Galahad, a dragon. Galahad is the last dragon in this part of England, after his species was scared away by humans. There are several other important characters from Iris' village, including her brother,

Jamie, and a spunky girl named Maud. Across the English Channel, we meet Jewish refugees Max and his grandmother who have fled Belgium to escape the Nazis.



Iris' life is turned upside down when her friendship with Galahad is discovered and he is locked away in a barn. Not only that, but her brother enlists in the British Army, and only a few days later, her father takes their family sailboat to help evacuate Allied troops from the invasion of Normandy. Left behind on the farm, Iris takes matters into her own hands and frees Galahad with Maud's help. Together, they search for Galahad's family, hoping the other dragons will join the war effort and help rescue the stranded British soldiers. But will the dragons be willing to aid the humans who shunned them and forced them out of their homeland?

Meanwhile, Max is at school when German Nazi soldiers invade his hometown and capture his parents; he barely escapes with his grandmother and tiny dog Plum. They join the flood of refugees fleeing the Nazis and hoping for sanctuary in France. But along the way, he and Plum get lost. Shortly after, Max is rescued by a group of British soldiers—including Iris' very own brother, Jamie. His battalion is bringing up the rear guard, setting traps and delaying the Nazi soldiers, and Max tags along as they make their way to Normandy.

With so much adventure, you might wonder if everything will tie up in the end, but Subity expertly brings together the many narrative strands. *Valor Wings* is well-written with a wide vocabulary, fast pacing, and relatable characters. Subity uses descriptive language and engaging dialog to keep the action moving. He is excellent at building tension, ending chapters on cliffhangers and switching narrators to keep readers guessing what might happen next. Moreover, Subity captures the horrors and realities of war while keeping this book strongly in the Middle Grade category, presenting the issues in an age-appropriate way. Between the vivid, descriptive language, gripping action, and well fleshed-out characters, *Valor Wings* is hard to put down.

CHARLOTTE HOUGHTON IS A PUBLIC LIBRARIAN IN THE COLUMBUS METRO AREA

JUVENILE

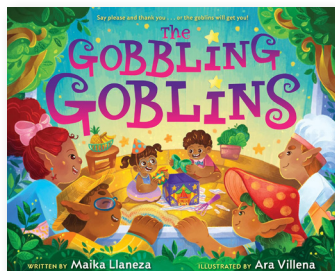
Llaneza, Maika. *The Gobbling Goblins*.

Illus. by Ara Villena.

New York, NY: Melissa de la Cruz Studio, 2025.

Fifty years ago, when I was in nursery school, my teacher passed out slices of pineapple. The child who brought the fruit to share with the class ate the flesh, as we all did, and then began eating the rind, as we all did not. We laughed. Miss

Betty scolded us and explained that in Carmelo's Filipino culture, they see nothing wrong with eating pineapple skin. This was the first lesson I remember about learning and honoring the customs of others.



Maika Llaneza's new book, *The Gobbling Goblins*, weaves a Filipino folktale and Filipino myth from her youth. Readers meet Caden and Cailyn and discover what happens when the two children disregard saying "thank you" for their new gifts. First and foremost, it's a tale of manners. It's also a lesson about those who correct our behaviors—they're not the enemies.

The book is marketed as a picture book, but I believe it also holds qualities of an easy reader. The layout is a nice mix of short, medium, and longer stanzas. Certain words appear in bold type, and the repetition of "gobble" serves as an introduction to onomatopoeias. The overall simple language helps highlight possible newer words like "scurry" and "transforming."

The art by Ara Villena is vibrant, fun, and dramatic—everything I expect from a Disney-Hyperion imprint.

The story is rich with Filipino tradition, an underrepresented culture in children's literature. Beyond the myth of goblins and elves, there are mentions of cuisines like pancit, lumpia, and lechon—a wonderful opportunity for family research. The story ends, and I'm not spoiling its fun twist, with a family meal as celebration.

The book definitely inspired me to deep dive into the Filipino cultural references mentioned, however, I still can't find anything about eating pineapple rind. But the lesson was still important, Miss Betty!

REVIEWED BY J. M. GREEN, WRITER AND POET, MIAMI UNIVERSITY

Lubner, Susan. *Drag and Rex: Forever Friends (Drag and Rex #1)*.

Illus. by Blythe Russo.

New York, NY: Pixel + Ink, 2023.

Lubner, Susan. *Drag and Rex: Sweet and Silly (Drag and Rex #2)*.

Illus. by Blythe Russo.

New York, NY: Pixel + Ink, 2024.

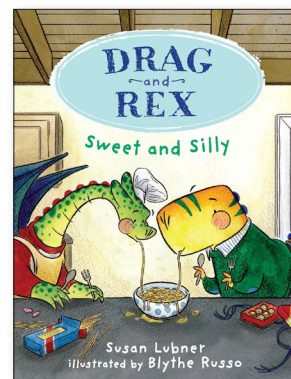
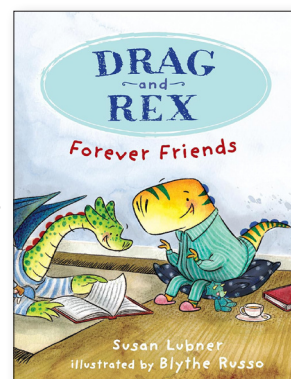
I loved reading *Drag and Rex: Forever Friends* and *Drag and Rex: Sweet and Silly*. They are written by Susan Lubner and illustrated by Blythe Russo. Blythe Russo lives in Cincinnati, Ohio.

In *Forever Friends*, Drag and Rex make a castle cake for their friend Lilly Pop, but then Drag eats the cake before they can give it to her. In *Sweet and Silly*, Drag says he is going to make oodles for dinner, but he can't find any oodle recipes. In the end, they find a torn letter "n" inside the box and realize it is a box of noodles, not oodles. Each book has three stories with three chapters. I would recommend these books to kids ages four to ten years old.

When I read the books, I enjoyed how silly and creative the stories were. Blythe Russo's illustrations have so much color and detail that they tell about half the story.

If you read the *Drag and Rex* books and are looking for more books by Blythe Russo, I would recommend *Sloth Sleeps Over*. In *Sloth Sleeps Over*, Sloth tries hard to stay up all night at a sleepover. It's cute and funny!

MY NAME IS ANDREW CANTERBURY. I AM EIGHT YEARS OLD AND I GO TO GRANBY ELEMENTARY IN WORTHINGTON, OHIO. I ENJOY READING, RIDING MY BIKE, AND PLAYING WITH LEGOS.



Book List

Our collection at Ohioana is always growing. To qualify for addition to our collection, a title must be written, illustrated, edited, photographed, and/or translated by an Ohioan **OR** contain content related to Ohio or Ohioans.

An “Ohioan” is defined as:

- Someone who was born in Ohio **OR**
- Someone who lived in Ohio for at least 3 years (the years do not need to be consecutive) **OR**
- Someone with a current, permanent residence in Ohio

For more information, please contact us at ohioana@ohioana.org.

The following books were added to Ohioana’s collection between March and June 2025.

NONFICTION

Bronson, Peter. ***Forbidden Fruit: Sin City’s Underworld and the Supper Club Inferno (Cincinnati History: Queen City of the West)***. Milford, OH: Chilidog Press, 2020. Author Peter Bronson tells the riveting, true story of a crime empire on the banks of the Ohio River and the war to clean it up that led to the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. It’s a tale of mobsters, hookers, murder, dirty cops, crooked politicians, and the underworld bosses whose power reached into the FBI, Congress, and even the White House.

Bronson, Peter. ***The Man Who Saved Cincinnati (Cincinnati History: Queen City of the West)***. Milford, OH: Chilidog Press, 2023. The thrilling story of Lou Wallace, the youngest general in the Union Army and known as “the man who saved Cincinnati” from a Confederate attack.

Bronson, Peter. ***Not in Our Town: The Queen City vs. the King of Smut (Cincinnati History: Queen City of the West)***. Milford, OH: Chilidog Press, 2022.

Not in Our Town is the untold story of the Mob in the Heartland and the gritty, dangerous battle to keep Cincinnati clean, safe, and morally reputable.

Bronson, Peter. ***Promised Land: How the Midwest Was Won (Cincinnati History: Queen City of the West)***. Milford, OH: Chilidog Press, 2024.

An overview of settlers along the Ohio River whose valiant battle for survival opened the Northwest Territory.

Farmer, James B. ***Morocco: A Remembrance of Childhood***. Los Angeles, CA: The Book Publishing Pros, 2024.

Author James B. Farmer recreates his childhood years growing up as the son of a United States Navy pilot in Port Lyautey, French Morocco, during the mid-1950s, at a time when Morocco was the epicenter of America’s Cold War efforts to deter and contain the Soviet Union through aerial reconnaissance and nuclear weapons.

Gaddis, Laura. ***Mosaic: A Memoir***. Portland, OR: Unsolicited Press, 2025.

Mosaic is a story of exploration and self-identification, of grief, relationships, tackling mental health, and how to walk through difficult times when there is nowhere else to go. The story follows Laura, who along with her husband Jason, embarked on having a baby, only to go on a journey that spanned over five years.

Glover, Lloyd C. ***Memoirs of a Soldier and an Ambassador for Christ***. Meadville, PA: Christian Faith Publishing, 2023.

This book looks back at the beginning of Sergeant Lloyd C. Glover’s relationship with God, his childhood growing up in a small town in New Jersey during the racial tensions of the 1960s and 1970s, and his time serving his country as a Christian soldier during the Gulf War.

Grier, Melvin, and Molly Kavanaugh. ***It Was Always About the Work: A Photojournalist’s Memoir***.

Cincinnati, OH: University of Cincinnati Press Library Press Publishing Services (CLIPS), 2023. Over the last six decades, Melvin Grier’s work has vividly portrayed community, humanity, irony, fear, war, elegance, art, and, most notably, the unexpected. *It Was Always About the Work* includes nearly one hundred black-and-white and color photographs, including images from Grier’s most famous exhibitions and news stories.

Huegel, Casey A. *Cleaning Up the Bomb Factory: Grassroots Activism and Nuclear Waste in the Midwest*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2024.

In 1984, a uranium leak at Ohio's outdated Fernald Feed Production Center highlighted the decades of harm inflicted on Cold War communities by negligent radioactive waste disposal. Casey A. Huegel tells the story of the unlikely partnership of grassroots activists, regulators, union workers, and politicians that responded to the event with a new kind of environmental movement.

Oller, John. *Gangster Hunters: How Hoover's G-Men Vanquished America's Deadliest Public Enemies*. New York, NY: Dutton, 2024.

In 1932, the FBI lacked jurisdiction over murder cases, bank robberies, and kidnappings. Relegated to the sidelines, agents spent their days at their desks. But all of that changed during the War on Crime, when hunting down infamous public enemies in tense shootouts thrust the Bureau into headlines for the first time. Through primary source research, John Oller transports readers right to the most harrowing and consequential raids of the 1930s.

Pauquette, Brad. *The Novel Matrix: The Complete Novel Writing Guide*. Minnetonka, MN: Bellwether, 2024.

A matrix is either the natural substance in which something forms, or it can be an interrelated system of information. *The Novel Matrix* is both, exploring the natural principles of storytelling that humans instinctively understand and expect in great stories.

Powhida, Doug. *Nobody Told Me: A Guide to Passable Parenting*. Westerville, OH: Doug Powhida, 2024.

Once you are a parent, you will inevitably say, "Nobody told me," as you run into things that no one prepared you for as the caretaker of a child. *Nobody Told Me* will tell you those things that everyone else forgot to mention. This book is not a roadmap through parenthood, but rather a sequential guide through the author's experiences as both a parent and having parents.

Rogers, Elizabeth Lindsey. *Miss Southeast: Essays*. Evanston, IL: Curbstone Books, 2024.

A collection of narrative essays on femininity, sexuality, community, and belonging that journeys across Ohio, New York, Louisiana, Arkansas, Washington, DC, and China.

Shunnarah, Mandy. *Midwest Shreds: Skating through America's Heartland*. Cleveland, OH: Belt Publishing, 2024.

In *Midwest Shreds*, Mandy Shunnarah travels around the region for a deep dive into its skating culture, detailing the activity's long, storied history and the large and diverse skating community that calls the Midwest home today.

Waggenspack, Dean, and Rosaleen Waggenspack. *The Ledge and The Abyss: Near Death, Rescue, and The Search for Meaning*. Kettering, OH: Belvoir Press, 2024.

A series of unforeseen events leads to Dean Waggenspack being trapped in a small, pitch-dark cavern surrounded by a volcanic rock wall in chest-high water with no way out. Above ground, his wife, Rosaleen, saw her husband disappear underwater. After no sighting of

him for ten minutes, she makes the difficult decision to leave the harsh surf and unsafe rocks to call 911 and hope for recovery of his body. This is a story of resilience in the face of long odds, and of ordinary people stepping up to offer help and hope.

Zaleski, Annie. *Taylor Swift: The Stories Behind the Songs*. San Diego, CA: Thunder Bay Press, 2024. *Taylor Swift: The Stories Behind the Songs* is a comprehensive review of the music superstar's entire songbook to date, covering all eleven studio albums and more than two hundred songs that tell a dramatic story of life, love, and triumph.

FICTION

Bagby, Susan. *Sweet Ridge Hearts (Maple Ridge #3)*. Pasadena, CA: She Rises Studios Publishing, 2024. Career-driven Katy Flanagan desperately wants to become the creative director of the Martin and Lewis marketing agency. When she loses the promotion and gets dumped by her boyfriend on the same day, Katy flees New York to stay with her cousin Christine in small-town Maple Ridge. Excited to find a use for her skills, Katy jumps in to help Christine win a competition for her Sweet Ridge Bakery. But nothing can prepare Katy for meeting the handsome bakery manager, Derek Higgins.

Burke, Kristina Elyse. *Son of the Siren*. Traverse City, MI: Oliver-Heber Books, 2024. Sometimes love is a curse. Such is the dark magic of a siren's song, the power of which half-siren Lirien witnesses for himself as he watches

his mother sing his father, the King of Ardeth, into the sea. In a fruitless attempt to reverse his father's fate, Lirien sings the siren song himself, not knowing its true power is seduction. Instead, he ensnares his stepmother, the Queen, with its hypnotic melody.

Burnett, E. A. *Of Gryphons and Runes (Enchantress Rising #1)*. Newark, OH: Talon & Ink Press, 2024. When a royal gryphon nearly kills her brother, two things become clear to nineteen-year-old Farren Blackburn: she is not the best person to care for her brother, and she despises the vicious beast who changed him forever. But an unwanted letter commands her father to fulfill a decade-long Servitude to the crown. In a desperate attempt to protect her family, Farren takes her father's place and is brought to Alidonia—a place full of infuriating Enchantments, a selfish queen, and two princes who are like oil and water.

Burse, Cynthia F. *For the Record: The Testimonies of Mary Magdalene and Judas Iscariot*. Morrisville, NC: Lulu Press, 2024. For more than 2,000 years, the Christian Church has portrayed Mary Magdalene as a prostitute who was healed of demonic possession by Jesus of Nazareth, and Judas Iscariot as a thief who betrayed the whereabouts of Jesus in exchange for a certain amount of money. In *For the Record: The Testimonies of Mary Magdalene and Judas Iscariot*, Mary and Judas finally get to have their say.

Eichenberger, Ray. *The Blood of the Ark*. Reynoldsburg, OH: Red Foot Racing Stables, 2024. The Third Jewish Temple in Jerusalem is ready to open, but

radical Jewish groups are threatening to sabotage its use unless the Ark of the Covenant is found and brought to the new Temple. Lute, Maria, and Malcolm are called to begin yet another quest to find the Holy Ark.

Eichenberger, Ray. *Blood of the Shroud, Seed of the Shroud*. Reynoldsburg, OH: Red Foot Racing Stables, 2024.

The Shroud of Turin, a.k.a. the burial cloth of Jesus—or is it? A scientific research team returns to Turin to again examine the iconic Shroud of Turin. But one team member, Lute Rothfuss, a famous blood expert and geneticist, has his own plans for the research and results. Lute's plan unfolds against the backdrop of a run for President of the United States.

Eichenberger, Ray. *The Girl Redeemed*. Reynoldsburg, OH: Red Foot Racing Stables, 2024. The story of the Virgin Mary from her youth to her betrothal to Joseph, to the birth of Jesus, and to the adult ministry of Jesus.

Essinger, Dave. *This World and The Next*. Mint Hill, NC: Main Street Rag/Mint Hill Books, 2024.

After a dysfunctional government gives way to rioting and blackouts, teen Rosa Calder takes shelter beneath an Ohio airbase with her obnoxious little brother, her best friend, Hannah, and some local idiot jocks. When they finally emerge, nothing works and everyone seems to have disappeared. Elsewhere, a nihilistic biochemical researcher roams the countryside incinerating the victims of a weaponized psychedelic neurotoxin. Rosa and the other misfit survivors must find out what went wrong in this coming-of-age story for the end of the world.

Frasher, S. *Era of the Moon (Dawn and Dusk #1)*. Middletown, OH: S. Frasher, 2023.

Every decade, the Isle hosts a competition in which one heir from each of the three royal families must lead a clan of warriors in a battle to the death. The prize is coveted above all else: to be crowned ruler over the entire Realm for the next ten years.

Holland, Emmie J. *A Bucket List Birthday (Oaklawn Coffee #1)*. Columbus, OH: Emmie J. Holland, 2024.

When Ellis Smalley realizes everyone will be out of town for her birthday, she decides to take matters into her own hands. Hiring a stranger from the internet to plan a day of birthday fun sounds crazy, but when Ellis meets Griffin Peterson and finds herself crashing a wedding, she can't help but think that he's planned the best birthday of her life. Griffin didn't expect to like the strange girl from the internet, but after a long night of wedding crashing and songwriting with her, he decides he doesn't want the adventure to end. Maybe they don't have to stay strangers after all.

Hone, Angola. *A Journey's Beginning (The Canid Chronology #1)*. Grove City, OH: Angola Hone, 2024.

Ashiy, a young redtail fox, has been raised in the remote smuggler's den of Whim's Haven. Hidden at the heart of a troll-infested forest, its population is full of ruffian raccoons, brigand bears, and snarl-toothed wolves. Ashiy dreams of seeing the wider world beyond its borders, but his mysterious elven godmother is determined to keep him close by her side. Ashiy discovers more than he bargained for after an illicit

and violent encounter with one of animalkind's oldest foes: man. It sets him on a perilous journey into the vast lands of Altharia, home to animals blessed with intelligence. Though Ashiy is at last free of Whim's Haven, his adventure may prove more bittersweet than joyous.

K-Horn, Sandra. *The Springridge Incident: A Novel of Forgiveness and Redemption*. Columbus, OH: Sandra Kucinich Horn, 2024. Madison, Ashley, and April sneak onto the property of "The Ghost House" in their town of Springridge to take selfies, a long-running but unsanctioned senior tradition. As they are leaving, the owner, Benjamin "Sonny" Franklin, shoots at them from an upstairs window, paralyzing April from the waist down. When the incident is investigated, it's discovered that Franklin, who has autism, has endured years of bullying and harassment from local teens, with his house constantly being vandalized. His attorney fails to bring this up at trial, and Franklin pleads guilty, receiving a fifteen-year prison sentence. Told from alternating viewpoints, *The Springridge Incident* explores themes of bullying, forgiveness, disability, resilience, and the justice system's failings.

King, Mercedes. *Jackie's New York (The Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis Collection #4)*. Chicago, IL: Triumph Productions, 2024. After the passing of her second husband, Jackie knows one thing for certain: she doesn't want to get married again. Thanks to a hefty settlement from Onassis' estate, her lifelong worries about money are over, giving her freedom she's never known. She reaches out to her longtime friend and publisher of

Viking Press, Tom Guinzburg, to see if he might take a chance at hiring her as an editor. Although Jackie has her own reservations about entering the workforce, she soon finds that editing suits her—until a book comes along that jeopardizes her position and new reputation.

Stone, Keith. *Dead Ball: The Pickleball Murder*. Hilliard, OH: Keith Stone, 2024. Quadriplegic author Keith Stone's fifth book tells a suspenseful story of chaos and murder on the Pickleball court. It's all fun and games—until someone takes things too far.

Sweeney, Dennis James. *The Rolodex Happenings*. Fairfax, VA: Stillhouse Press, 2024. Guy Sutter Jr. thought he knew his parents. But as he flips through a seemingly innocuous Rolodex discovered among his late father's effects, he finds that the yellowing, typewritten cards recount moments of play, odd joy, sexual awakening, jealousy, and fear that comprise both a secret history and a startling new window into Guy's own childhood.

Thompson, Cassandra L. *Welcome to Meadowbrook*. Brecksville, OH: Quill & Crow Publishing House, 2024. A psychiatric facility. An upscale hotel. A casino. A place for wellness. A retreat. No matter the decade, the Meadowbrook, a towering edifice perched on top of a mountain, inspires both awe and fear. It holds the secrets of all who have walked her halls—and those who haunt them still. Told in a series of short stories from alternating viewpoints and different eras, *Welcome to Meadowbrook* is the unique tale of a place that is more than what it seems.

Welsh-Huggins, Andrew. *The Mailman (A Mercury Carter Thriller #1)*. New York, NY: Mysterious Press, 2025.

In a new thriller from Andrew Welsh-Huggins, acclaimed author of *The End of the Road* and the Andy Hayes Mystery series, a former postal inspection agent tracks a violent crew through the Midwest to rescue a kidnapped woman.

Willis, Jay S. *Guardians of the Sphere (The Sphere Saga #5)*. Portsmouth, OH: Arcanidium Press, 2024.

Vrom Krasztar is tired of fighting. The intelligent war wizard hopes to put his past crimes to bed so he can finally settle down with his loved ones. But when his people once more come under attack, the weary warrior refuses to stand aside. As deadly millennia-long feuds come to a head, will anyone be left standing?

POETRY

Ahmed, Hussain. *Blue Exodus*. Asheville, NC: Orison Books, 2024. *Blue Exodus*, Hussain Ahmed's second full-length poetry collection, was selected by Rajiv Mohabir as the winner of the 2022 Orison Poetry Prize. This book charts a heart's history of home, war, dispossession, and displacement, as well as the human solidarity and sacred rituals that remain despite so much loss.

Knott, Kip. *A Mob of Kangaroos: Poems*. Shenandoah Valley, VA: Ridge Books, 2024.

A Mob of Kangaroos is a haunting exploration of a nation at the edge of its moral and existential limits. Through a series of unflinching

poems, Knott confronts the events of January 6, 2021, as both a catalyst and a reflection of deeper societal fractures.

Liderbach, Cora McCann.

Throughline. Georgetown, KY:

Finishing Line Press, 2024.

Throughline weaves a poet's life story together from childhood through twilight years. Born to warring parents and afflicted with a disability in adolescence, the author never stops searching for meaning, peace, and partnership, eventually learning to find her own "reasons to celebrate."

Puñales-Alpízar, Damaris. ***No vine a hacerme la inocente***. Isla de San Borondón, Spain: Liliputienses, 2024. Published in Spanish, this is poet Damaris Puñales-Alpízar's first collection of poetry, honoring her Cuban roots.

YOUNG ADULT

Boyce, Kristy. ***Dating and Dragons***. New York, NY: Delacorte Romance, 2024.

When Quinn Norton joins a Dungeons & Dragons game at her new high school, she finds herself in a group that takes themselves seriously. They livestream their games and enforce strict rules. Quinn doesn't mind the restrictions as long as she can make new friends—until fellow campaign member Logan Weber makes it increasingly difficult to follow the "no dating other group members" rule.

Pérez, Ashley Hope. ***Banned Together: Our Fight for Readers' Rights***. New York, NY: Holiday House, 2025.

This dazzling YA anthology of short stories, memoir, poetry, graphic

narratives, and essays spotlights the transformative power of books while equipping teens to fight for the freedom to read. Narrated and edited by Printz Honor-winning author Ashley Hope Pérez.

Swan, Jordan Riley. ***Under an Emerald Spell (A Wholesome Romance in Oz #2)***. Columbus, OH: Story Garden Publishing, 2024.

Conman Isaac wants to steal the title of Wizard of Oz. Glinda the Good sacrifices her time and magic to help everyone but herself. When the mayor of Emerald City announces a competition for a powerful wish, both Glinda and Isaac are willing to do whatever it takes to win.

Wenck, Ray. ***Toledo Fall (October Fall World #2)***. Linden, MI:

Raventhorne Books, 2024.

Ferris Ford decides to play hooky, "borrowing" his grandmother's car and dragging along his sidekick Laurent to go see his crush play a field hockey game out of town. Everything goes perfectly . . . until a devastating EMP knocks out all power, plunging the world into a pre-electronics meltdown.

MIDDLE GRADE

Barone, Rebecca E. F. ***Mountain of Fire: The Eruption and Survivors of Mount St. Helens***. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Co. Books for Young Readers, 2024.

Mountain of Fire is the narrative nonfiction account of the violent volcanic eruption of Mount St. Helens on May 18, 1980, entailing the story of the people who died, those who survived, and the heroes who fought to raise the alarm.

Juravich, Jonathan, and Richard V. Reeves. ***Yes, Boys Can! Inspiring Stories of Men Who Changed the World - He Can H.E.A.L.*** Illus. by Chris King. Beverly, MA: Quarry Books, 2024.

Inspire boys to be confident and caring through the biographies of fifty fascinating men, past and present, representing the underrepresented fields of health, education, the arts, and literacy (HEAL).

Lady, Jason R. ***The Pure Shore Club***. Castroville, TX: Black Rose Writing, 2025.

Hidden clubhouses, a sentient computer program, and a man who vanishes from sight are just a few of the mysteries Abby, Brett, and Maxine are investigating. Oh, and some brand new super powers they never asked for. Who said eighth grade would be easy?

Patton, J. Ditchburn. ***Bigfoot is a Jerk***. Rocky River, OH: Bizarre Books, 2025.

Twelve-year-old Zander wants nothing to do with summer camp, especially when it involves an overnight hike with the five other camp "misfits." When someone, or *something*, kidnaps their counselor, the unhappy campers are forced to find their way back to the main camp on their own. But help feels further away with every wrong turn they make—and every giant footprint they find.

Storad, Conrad J. ***Night Watchers (Story Monsters' S.T.E.A.M. Chronicles #1)***. Illus. by Jeff Yesh. Chandler, AZ: Story Monsters Press, 2024.

Eddie the elf owl serves as a learning guide to explore the amazing world of nocturnal creatures that

live throughout North America. Blending nonfiction topics with a captivating narrative, *Night Watchers* is designed to promote literacy and a desire to learn more about science and nature.

JUVENILE

Braithwaite, Lisa D. *Miles of Style: Eunice W. Johnson and the EBONY Fashion Fair*. Illus. by Lynn Gaines. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books, 2024.

A chic biography about Eunice W. Johnson, who brought elegant and contemporary fashion to Black America through the annual *EBONY* Fashion Fair.

Brown, Lorena. *Mi Papito no es Mi Papito / My Daddy is Not My Daddy*. Columbus, OH: Pukiyari Publishing, 2024.

Whether by nature or by adoption, a father is the one who is present during upbringing, in good times and bad, instilling values and creating indelible memories. In this tender story, Lorena Brown explores the relationship between a girl and her adoptive father.

Elasky, Kathy S. *Pudgy Possum in a Pickle: Peppermint to the Rescue!* Buchtel, OH: Monday Creek Publishing, 2024.

Every critter must learn to deal with temptations. When Pudgy the possum has trouble coping with a temptation of his own, his friend Peppermint helps him deal with his poor choice.

Fehskens, Michael. *Sam Hay's Spooky Day*. Columbus, OH: Michael Fehskens, 2024.

Scarecrow Sam Hay has his work cut out for him when a horde of corvids arrives on the day of the fall festival. Help Sam track down all the pesky crows in this fun search-and-find adventure for all ages.

Fredelake, Abigail. *Carl Goes to New York*. Illus. by Fiona Miller. Columbus, OH: Pilkington Publishing, 2024.

Explore one of the most magnificent cities in the world through the eyes of Carl, a dog who thinks he is a polar bear. While trying to discover his family in the bustling metropolis of New York City, Carl meets some faithful friends along the way.

Kelly, Mark. *Mousetronaut Saves the World: Based on a (Partially) True Story*. Illus. by C. F. Payne. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster/

Paula Wiseman Books, 2024. Meteor the Mousetronaut defends Earth from an asteroid in this exciting story from *New York Times* bestselling-author and retired NASA astronaut commander Mark Kelly with illustrations by renowned artist C. F. Payne.

Koponen, Libby. *Is That the Bus?* Illus. by Katie Mazeika. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge, 2024.

One eager little brother is at home, playing alone. He listens and watches for a variety of trucks and vehicles that pass by all day. But he's really hoping the big yellow bus will be next. At long last, the bus pulls up—with his big sister on board. A perfect read for toddlers who love all things that go and are excited to welcome their older siblings home after school.

Laínez, René Colato. *Let's Play in the Park / Juguemos en el parque (My Friend, Mi Amigo #3)*. Illus. by Nomar Perez. New York, NY: Holiday House, 2024.

Two friends, an English speaker and a Spanish speaker, go to the park for a day filled with games and making new buddies.

Ludlow, Roberta. *Lionel Messi: A Little Golden Book Biography*.

Illus. by Nomar Perez. New York, NY: Little Golden Books, 2024. Help your little one dream big with a Little Golden Book biography about Argentine professional footballer Lionel Messi.

MacKenzie, Sarah. *Because Barbara: Barbara Cooney Paints Her World*. Illus. by Eileen Ryan Ewen. Spokane, WA: Waxwing Books, 2024.

Legendary picture book creator Barbara Cooney once noticed that the library in her little town by the sea needed attention. A library, she knew, should be a kind of paradise. And because Barbara did whatever she set her mind to, she made it one. Follow Barbara from New York to Maine, from the shores of Greece to the mountains of Appalachia, as she paints the beauty of the world and creates some of the most magnificent books for children ever published.

Makhsimova, Sabrina. *Merfolk Village*. Illus. by Dinara Mirtalipova. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2024.

A charmingly magical underwater world . . . made of books! *Merfolk Village*, created by a talented mother-daughter duo, features a trifold case that opens up to reveal three cleverly disguised books nestled in wave-like pockets.

Mazeika, Katie. ***Maybe Just Ask Me!*** New York, NY: Beach Lane Books, 2025.

Based on author-illustrator Katie Mazeika's childhood experiences after losing an eye to cancer, *Maybe Just Ask Me!* reminds us all to be brave, to be honest, and to just ask, especially when we are confused.

McElroy, Yolanda. ***Grandpa Long Legs***. Illus. by Tyrus Loshay. Columbus, OH: MochaPrism, 2024. *Grandpa Long Legs* is a heartfelt story about the deep bond between a grandfather and grandson. Experience their adventures in the park and celebrate the simplicity of love that transcends generations.

Pizza, Andy J., and Sophie Miller. ***Feel Calm (Invisible Things #2)***. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2024. From the creators of the *New York Times* bestseller *Invisible Things*, this hands-on board book leads toddlers on a whimsical and reassuring journey from chaos to calm.

Pizza, Andy J., and Sophie Miller. ***Get the Giggles (Invisible Things #3)***. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2024. Bring on the giggles with this wonderfully wacky board book from the creators of the *New York Times* bestseller *Invisible Things*.

Rigaud, Debbie. ***The Littlest Food Critic***. Illus. by Rachel Más Davidson. New York, NY: Nancy Paulsen Books, 2024. Little Sebastian has a lot of opinions when it comes to food. When a restaurant outing throws him for a loop, a one-binky review seems inevitable. When his parents save the day, Sebastian realizes the

special ingredient they've been adding to every meal—one that deserves five binkies.

Rush, Jade. ***A Recipe to Recycle***. Illus. by Evelyn Asteria. Mentor, OH: Green Adventures, 2024. *A Recipe to Recycle* takes readers on a journey with Ryland, a child with a newfound knowledge of recycling. Accompanied by his parents, Ryland takes a trip to the grocery store where he introduces his parents to the seven Rs of Recycling: Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Repurpose, Reuse, Recycle, and Rot!

Sadler, Marilyn. ***It's Not Easy Being A Ghost: A Halloween Book for Kids and Toddlers***. Illus. by Steph Laberis. New York, NY: Random House Books for Young Readers, 2024. Life isn't always easy—even for a ghost. In this funny follow-up to *It's Not Easy Being Santa Claus*, a ghost discovers that happiness comes from within when she learns to accept that she's simply too cute to be spooky.

Salamon, Julie. ***One More Story, Tata!*** Illus. by Jill Weber. New York, NY: Minerva, 2024. This heartwarming story of a little girl's bond with her great grandma, who tells the silliest, most magical stories, celebrates four generations of a Jewish family who come together for Shabbat.

Scheele, Kyle. ***A Sundae with Everything on It***. Illus. by Andy J. Pizza. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2024. Fans of Andy J. Pizza's *Creative Pep Talk* podcast and Kyle Scheele's TikTok channel will love this sequel to their laugh-out-loud picture book hit, *A Pizza with Everything on It*.

Skillian, Devin. ***Memoirs of a Dog***. Illus. by Tim Bowers. Ann Arbor, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2024. Topanga the dog gets blamed for everything, but she's here to tell you that the only reason the household works at all is because she's the one in charge. Topanga wakes up the family, takes Big Guy for a run, gets the kids off to school on time, and chases off that trouble-making raccoon. Will Topanga's family ever realize what a giant role she plays in their lives?

Ullom-Vucelich, Dana. ***I'll Never Forget***. Illus. by Rus Webb. Powell, OH: DUV Enterprises, 2024. This book is for the memory makers who create ordinary days and extraordinary moments, and the memory keepers who hold those days and moments forever in their hearts.

Williams, Brittany. ***A Mindful Halloween: Staying Calm and Brave During the Spooky Fun***. Fairview Park, OH: Brittany Williams, 2024. Halloween is a time for costumes, parties, and trick-or-treating, but sometimes all the spooky excitement can feel a little overwhelming. *A Mindful Halloween* follows the journey of a little boy who loves Halloween but finds himself feeling scared when the fun gets too spooky.

Williams, Brittany. ***The Seaweed Fish: A Mindful Adventure in Fishing***. Fairview Park, OH: Brittany Williams, 2024. Declan dreams of catching a big fish on his first fishing adventure with grandpa. But he reels in something completely unexpected: seaweed! Through Declan's eyes, young readers will discover the magic of finding joy in the moment and letting go of expectations.

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