

Ohioana News

October 2026

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The 2025 Ohio Book Award winners (photo by Magical Minutes Photography)

2026 Ohio Book Awards

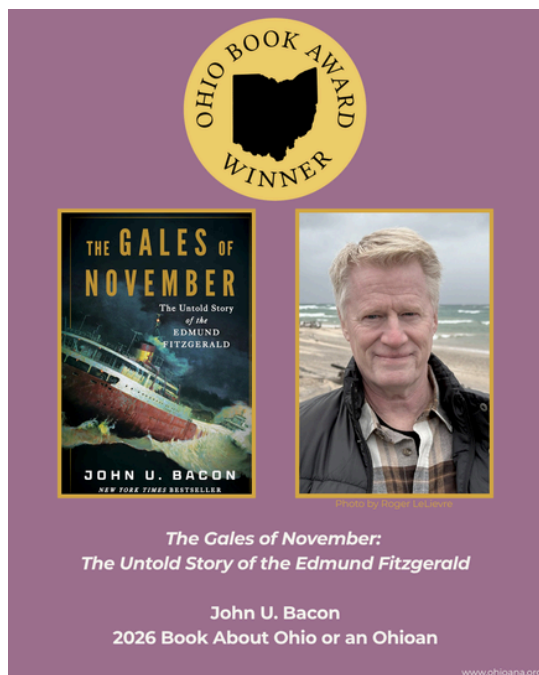
The 2026 Ohio Book Awards will take place online on Zoom, on Thursday, October 15 at 7:00pm. This is a free event, though donations are welcome.

First given in 1942, the Ohio Book Awards (formerly known as the Ohioana Book Awards) are the second oldest state literary prizes in the nation and honor outstanding works by Ohio authors and illustrators in six categories: Fiction, Poetry, Juvenile Literature, Middle Grade Literature, Young Adult Literature, and Nonfiction. The seventh category, Book About Ohio or an Ohioan, may include books by non-Ohio authors. The Awards also include the Walter Rumsey Marvin Grant, established in honor of the Ohioana Library Association's second director, who served from 1954 to 1965. The Marvin Grant is awarded annually to a writer 30 years of age or younger who has not yet published a book.

Seven of the Ohio Book Award winners, as well as the Marvin Grant recipient, are selected by juries. The Readers' Choice Award is determined by voters in a public online poll. Over 3,000 votes were cast for 2026's Readers' Choice Award!

Recipients of the 2026 Ohio Book Awards include literary superstars as well as debut authors. They include native Ohioans and lifelong residents from across the state, as well as writers who no longer reside in Ohio, but whose time in Ohio continues to be a deep influence on their writing and careers.

Nearly every major writer from Ohio in the past 80 years has received an award from the Ohioana Library, including James Thurber, Robert McCloskey, Toni Morrison, Mary Oliver, Rita Dove, Hanif Abdurraqib, Anthony Doerr, Celeste Ng, Edmund White, Virginia Hamilton, and many more. We are excited to welcome this year's recipients to this distinguished group. (continued on page 02-10)



(2026 Ohio Book Award Winners)

Book About Ohio or an Ohioan:

John U. Bacon

The Gales of November:

The Untold Story of the Edmund Fitzgerald

Liveright Publishing, 2025

On the fiftieth anniversary of the *Edmund Fitzgerald's* sinking, John U. Bacon, the author of *The Great Halifax Explosion*, tells the definitive story of the "Mighty Fitz," which was sometimes called "The Toledo Express."

This definitive account of the the tragic Great Lakes disaster draws on more than 100 interviews with the families, friends, and former crewmates of those lost. Most of the crew, including Captain Ernest McSorley, were from Ohio.

Bacon explores the vital role Great Lakes shipping played in America's economic boom, the uncommon lives the sailors led, the sinking's most likely causes, and the heartbreaking aftermath for those left behind—"the wives, the sons, and the daughters," as Gordon Lightfoot sang in his unforgettable ballad, "The Wreck of the *Edmund Fitzgerald*."

John U. Bacon is a *New York Times* bestselling author who has worked more than three decades as a writer, public speaker, college instructor, radio and TV commentator, and high school hockey coach, winning awards for all five. He has authored fourteen books on sports, business, health, and history, eight of which are national bestsellers.

(2026 Ohio Book Award Winners)

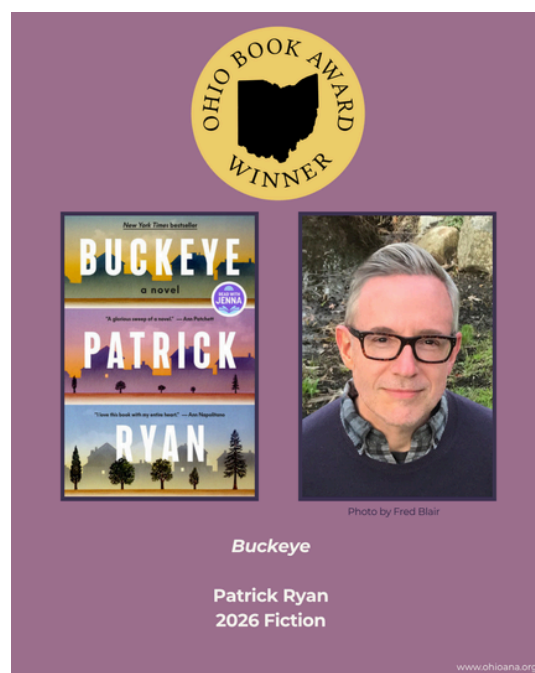
Fiction:

Patrick Ryan

Buckeye

Random House, 2025

In the jubilant aftermath of the Allied victory in Europe, Cal Jenkins, a man wounded not in war but by his inability to serve in it, shares a single, life-altering moment with Margaret Salt, a woman determined to outrun her past.

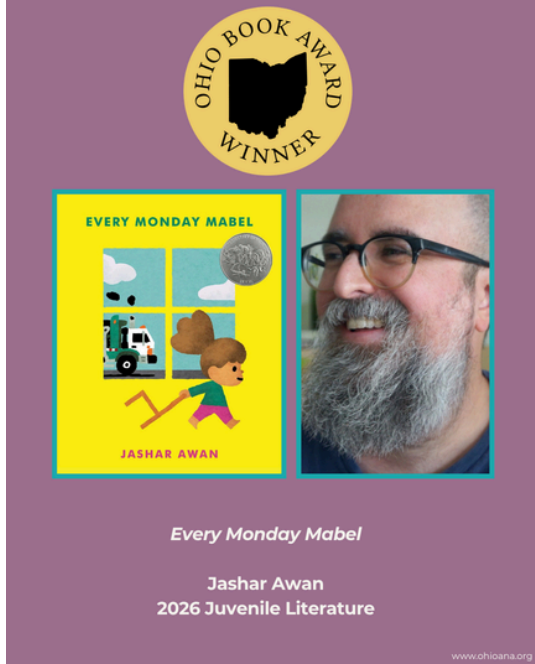


Cal is married to Becky, whose spiritual gifts help the living speak to the dead, while Margaret's husband, Felix, is serving at sea, believed to be safe—until a telegram suggests otherwise. What begins as a fleeting transgression becomes a complex secret that irrevocably binds all four of them in unexpected ways. As their small Ohio town remakes itself in the postwar boom, the Salt and Jenkins families remain in each other's orbit, and the consequences of choices made long ago begin to emerge, reshaping their lives in ways that will forever impact the next generation.

Patrick Ryan was born in Washington, D.C., and grew up on Merritt Island, Florida. He's a graduate of Florida State University and Bowling Green State University's Creative Writing Program in Ohio.

Buckeye became a *New York Times* bestseller, a Read with Jenna pick, Amazon's Best Book of 2025, a Barnes & Noble National Book Club Selection, a finalist for Barnes & Noble's Book of the Year, and a Book-of-the-Month Club Selection. It is a finalist for the Mark Twain American Voice in Literature Award. His first book, the linked story collection *Send Me* was chosen for Barnes and Noble's Discovery Series. His second collection, *The Dream of Astronauts* was named one of the Best Books of the Year by the *St. Louis Times-Dispatch*, LitHub, and Electric Literature, and was long-listed for The Story Prize. He is also the author of three books for young adults: *Saints of Augustine*, *In Mike We Trust*, and *Gemini Bites*. The former associate editor of *Granta*, Patrick is the editor-in-chief of *One Story*. He lives in Manhattan.

(2026 Ohio Book Award Winners)



Juvenile

Jashar Awan

Every Monday Mabel

Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2025.

Every Monday, Mabel wakes up early and peeks out her window to make sure she didn't miss the one thing she's been looking forward to the whole week. She drags her chair down the hallway, past her big sister and Mom and Dad, out the door, and waits.

What is Mabel waiting for every Monday? According to Mabel, it's the best thing in the world. But no one else in her family seems to understand...until they see what's honking down the street!

Jashar Awan is an award-winning author and illustrator of books for children. Growing up outside of Washington, DC, Jashar loved drawing and reading. In fact, he still does. For many years, he drew illustrations for publications such as *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times*.

Since being named a Publishers' Weekly Flying Start with his debut picture book *What a Lucky Day!* in 2020, his subsequent books have garnered starred reviews and spots on state reading lists and best-of lists from the New York Public Library, Chicago Public Library, *Kirkus Reviews*, *School Library Journal*, *Good Housekeeping*, NPR, and more. He is the creator of the Theodor Seuss Geisel Honor Book *Towed by Toad* and the Caldecott Honor book *Every Monday Mabel*. He lives in Ohio with his wife and their son, who loves drawing and reading, too.

(2026 Ohio Book Award Winners)

Middle Grade

Rosalyn Ransaw

Smoke & Mirrors

Amulet Books, 2025.

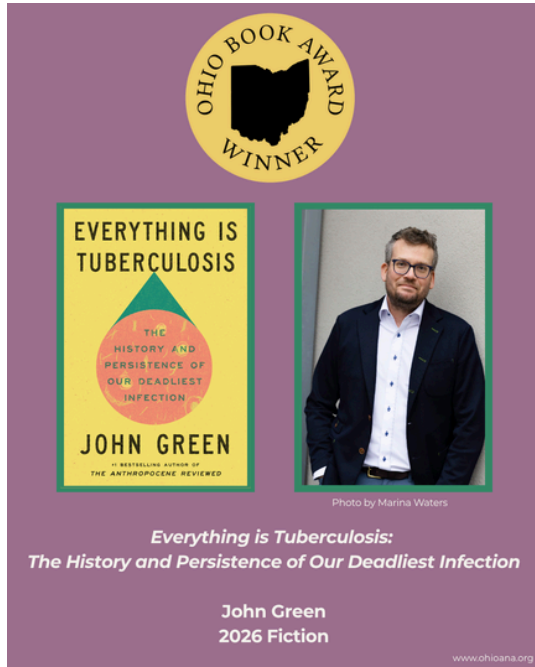
Spending the summer with his aunt as the only Black kid in a small Midwestern town was bad enough, but now Andy Carter's summer has been effectively ruined. His dad's parole hearing is postponed, he misses his friends, and when an old barn burns down, he's stuck taking the blame.

Andy is sentenced with helping the barn's owner, a cantankerous old man, renovate his crumbling mansion; a mansion that hides a mystery. It was once owned by the famous magician the Red Knave. In 1954, the Knave was a wanted suspect in the town's most infamous murder before disappearing without a trace.

The whole town is sure the Red Knave is guilty, but to Andy, things just don't add up. Investigating a mystery from the '50s isn't the same as spending time with his dad, but Andy can't help but be drawn into the Red Knave's exciting world of magic and illusion. To solve the Knave's final vanishing act, Andy teams up with another boy he doesn't quite trust. Secret by secret, they try to uncover the Red Knave's identity and learn why his last performance came to such a tragic end.

Rosalyn Ransaw is a children's author of middle-grade mysteries with twisting plots and diverse main characters. She has a B.A. from Columbia University in Political Science and currently lives in Columbus, Ohio. When not writing, you can find her working her day job as a Marketing Manager, scrolling through social media, or brainstorming her next book idea. She is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI).





(2026 Ohio Book Award Winners)

Nonfiction

John Green

Everything is Tuberculosis: The History and Persistence of Our Deadliest Infection

Crash Course Books, 2025.

Tuberculosis has been entwined with humanity for millennia. Once romanticized as a malady of poets, today tuberculosis is seen as a disease of poverty that walks the trails of injustice and inequity we blazed for it.

In 2019, author John Green met Henry Reider, a young tuberculosis patient at Lakka Government Hospital in Sierra Leone. John became fast friends with Henry, a boy with spindly legs and a big, goofy smile. In the years since that first visit to Lakka, Green has become a vocal advocate for increased access to treatment and wider awareness of the healthcare inequities that allow this curable, preventable infectious disease to also be the deadliest, killing over a million people every year. In *Everything is Tuberculosis*, John tells Henry's story, woven through with the scientific and social histories of how tuberculosis has shaped our world—and how our choices will shape the future of tuberculosis.

John Green is the award-winning, bestselling author of books including *Looking for Alaska*, *The Fault in Our Stars*, *Turtles All the Way Down*, and *The Anthropocene Reviewed*. With his brother, Hank, John has co-created many online video projects, including Vlogbrothers and the educational channel Crash Course. John's books have won many prizes, including an Audie Award, an Edgar Award, the Michael L. Printz Medal, and a *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize. John lives with his family in Indianapolis. He graduated from Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, and worked as a student chaplain at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, where he was inspired to become an author, and later to write *The Fault in Our Stars*.

Poetry

Arah Ko

Brine Orchid: Poems

YesYes Books, 2025.

"I have decided to be happy/ in spite of everything that came before,/ and because of it," declares the speaker in *Brine Orchid*. Weaving in and out of myth, scripture, and immigrant family lore, the poems in Arah Ko's spectacular debut create a tribute to Korean diaspora, the inheritance of storytelling, and the enduring survival of lineage that is both searing and tender.

The collection traces the contours of Korean American heritage and its intersections with trauma, spirituality, colonialism, food, gender, and the natural world. By calling on figures of the past, these poems are permeated with a sense of absence and questioning both in form and content. While the writer's immigrant family tends to live in the present as a method of survival, this poetry turns to history in order to mourn loss and wounds, acknowledge change, and celebrate the endurance of familial love and culture.

A poet, editor, teacher, and fiction writer, Arah Ko is the author of the chapbook *Animal Logic*. Her work has been published or is forthcoming in *The American Poetry Review*, *Ninth Letter*, *RHINO*, *Colorado Review*, *The Threepenny Review*, *Quarterly West*, *Waxwing*, and more. She was awarded an Academy of American Poets Arthur Rense Prize, a Helen Earnhart Harley Creative Writing Fellowship Award in Poetry, and the 2021 Janet B. McCabe Poetry Prize.

Arah hails from Hawai'i. She received her MFA in creative writing from the Ohio State University in Columbus where she served on the staff of *The Journal*. She is currently a Ph.D. student at The University of Cincinnati where she also serves on the staff of *The Cincinnati Review*.



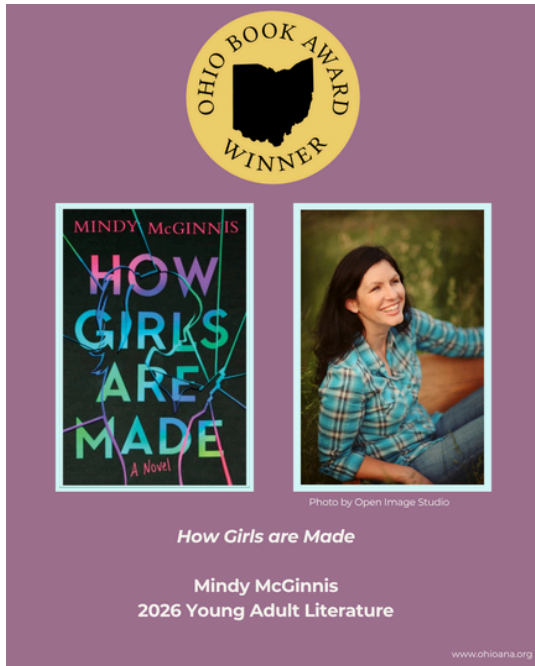
(2026 Ohio Book Award Winners)

Young Adult

Mindy McGinnis

How Girls Are Made

HarperCollins, 2025



Fallon is a fixer. From planning prom to organizing her college applications, she's got it all figured out...except for when her younger sister comes to her with very basic questions about sex. Shocked that she knows so little (and her fellow classmates even less), Fallon decides some practical education is in order. And Fallon isn't above practicing a little civil disobedience by creating a secret underground off-campus group.

Shelby is a fighter. Having her nose broken is nothing new in her semiprofessional career...but this time it's her boyfriend who threw the punch. Now her phone is blowing up with texts from a new guy who tells her she's perfect, she's special, she's everything he's ever wanted...except for a few small details. Shelby's happy to adjust for him, because isn't that what a healthy relationship is about?

Jobie is a failure. She doesn't have enough followers, and her posts never go viral, no matter how hard she crushes challenges and applies exactly the right filter. But a friendly DM from a good girl just like her points her in the direction of a whole new audience of admirers. Guys who just want to talk. Guys who give her the attention she's always wanted.

The lives of all three girls intersect in Fallon's secret class, rumors of which have parents up in arms. Each girl finds herself trapped in an inescapable situation—that will leave one of them dead.

Mindy McGinnis is the author of several young adult novels, including *Under This Red Rock*, *A Long Stretch of Bad Days*, *The Last Laugh*, *The Initial Insult*, *Heroine*, *The Female of the Species*, and *A Madness so Discreet*, winner of an Edgar Award. While her settings may change, you can always count on her books to deliver grit, truth, and an unflinching look at humanity and the world around us. Mindy lives in Ohio.

Readers' Choice

Marty Ross-Dolen

***Always There, Always Gone:
A Daughter's Search for Truth***

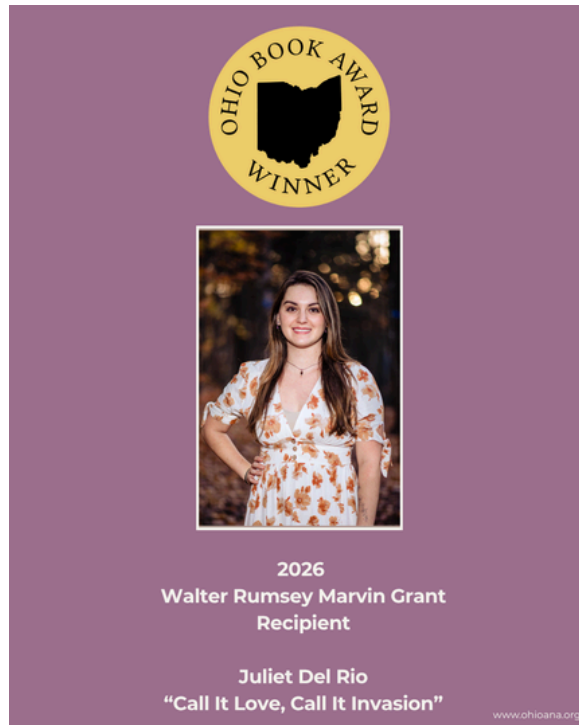
She Writes Press, 2025

In 1960, six years before Marty Ross-Dolen was born, her maternal grandparents were killed in an airline disaster involving the collision of two commercial jets over New York City. They were traveling from Columbus, Ohio, to seek placement for their family's iconic magazine, Highlights for Children, on the newsstands. Their daughter—Marty's mother—was fourteen years old at the time. This genre-bending memoir tells Marty's story of being raised by a mother in protracted mourning.

The fragmented narrative explores Marty's journey, from personal ways of coping as a child to the evolution of a mother-daughter relationship that matured over time. It is also about her longing to know her maternal grandmother, and through saved letters and photographs from her grandmother's life, she enters a fantastical relationship that serves to replace one that otherwise could never exist. Ultimately it is about the discovery of truth, in unearthing the story of her grandparents' deaths and her mother's acute loss, in freeing her grandmother's image from the weight of a tragic death, and in Marty's own delivery from darkness. Beyond that, it is about universal life choices, the ways human beings unknowingly determine their destinies, and the healing powers of truth and love.

Marty Ross-Dolen is a graduate of Wellesley College and Albert Einstein College of Medicine and is a retired child and adolescent psychiatrist. She holds an MFA in Writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts. Prior to her time at VCFA, she participated in graduate-level workshops at The Ohio State University. Her essays have appeared in North Dakota Quarterly, Redivider, Lilith, Willow Review, and the Brevity Blog, among others. Her essay entitled "Diphtheria" was named a notable essay in *The Best American Essays* book series. She is a certified book coach in memoir and lives in Columbus, Ohio.





(2026 Ohio Book Award Winners)

2026 Ohioana Walter Rumsey Marvin Grant:

Juliet Del Rio

"Call it Love, Call it Invasion"

Juliet Del Rio is a North Royalton, Ohio native who now writes from East Haddam, Connecticut. Her eco-fiction and climate fiction come from an Ohio childhood spent biking the Erie Canal towpath, hiking Cuyahoga Valley, and swimming in Lake Erie, and from the anxiety of watching those places change. Writing about the speculative what-if is how she works through it. "Call It Love, Call It Invasion" began with an invasive insect and became a story about how something can take over so gradually that you don't notice what it has displaced until it's you. She holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Drexel University, teaches college composition, and works as a content strategist at a creative marketing agency. Her fiction was shortlisted for the 2023 Lascaux Prize in Flash Fiction, and her children's play received a 2020 Story Medicine grant from Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. She is also a trained master gardener.

The 2026 Ohio Book Awards

Join us LIVE on Zoom October 15, 2026 at 7:00pm!

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2026-ohio-book-awards-tickets-1999267988372>

Nominate Your Book for the 2027 Ohio Book Awards

Established in 1942, the Ohio Book Awards recognize Ohio authors and illustrators for outstanding books published each calendar year in the categories of Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, Young Adult Literature, Middle Grade Literature, Juvenile Literature, and Book about Ohio or an Ohioan (which may include books by non-Ohio authors or illustrators).

Visit www.ohioana.org for the nomination form and more information about eligibility.

Nomination forms must be postmarked by December 31, 2026, to be considered for the 2027 Awards. YES, you may absolutely nominate yourself!

Support Ohioana!

Your financial contribution helps the Ohioana Library collect, preserve, and promote the written works of Ohio's talented writers, authors, and illustrators.

Visit www.ohioana.org to support Ohioana's mission to preserve Ohio's stories!

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