



Reimagined

Sessions & Bios Directory



CITYLIT PROJECT IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH ENOCH PRATT FREE LIBRARY PRESENTS:

WORDS ON THE WINDS OF CHANGE

A MONTH-LONG VIRTUAL CELEBRATION FOR
READERS AND WRITERS WITH A DAYLONG PROGRAM
ON SATURDAY, MARCH 20, 2021



CITYLIT
PROJECT



ENOCH PRATT *free* LIBRARY

#citylitfest2021 | @citylitproject | @citylitproject | CityLitProject



SESSION DIRECTORY

2021

FEATURED SESSIONS

TUESDAY, MARCH 2

Tales of a Different World

In an exhilarating tale of colliding worlds, **EMILY ST. JOHN**'s *The Glass Hotel* paints a breathtaking portrait of greed and guilt, love and delusion, and the infinite ways we search for meaning in our lives. In **JENNY OFFILL**'s funny and urgent *Weather*, the foreboding sense of doom commands a family and presents a nation in crisis, and how we weather it. Both authors will be in a conversation moderated by **Marion Winik**, author of *The Big Book of the Dead*.

7:00 - 8:00 pm: Zoom Webinar

8:00 - 8:30 pm: Zoom Meeting: The Writer's Room*

TUESDAY, MARCH 9

Terrance Hayes: A Poet of These Times – How We Breathe

Author of *American Sonnets for My Past and Future Assassin* and National Book Award winner (for *Lighthouse*), **TERRANCE HAYES** reads and discusses his work in light of the upheavals of 2020. **Clint Smith**, poet, staff writer at The Atlantic, and author of the forthcoming *How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning With the History of Slavery Across America* moderates.

7:00 - 8:00 pm: Zoom Webinar

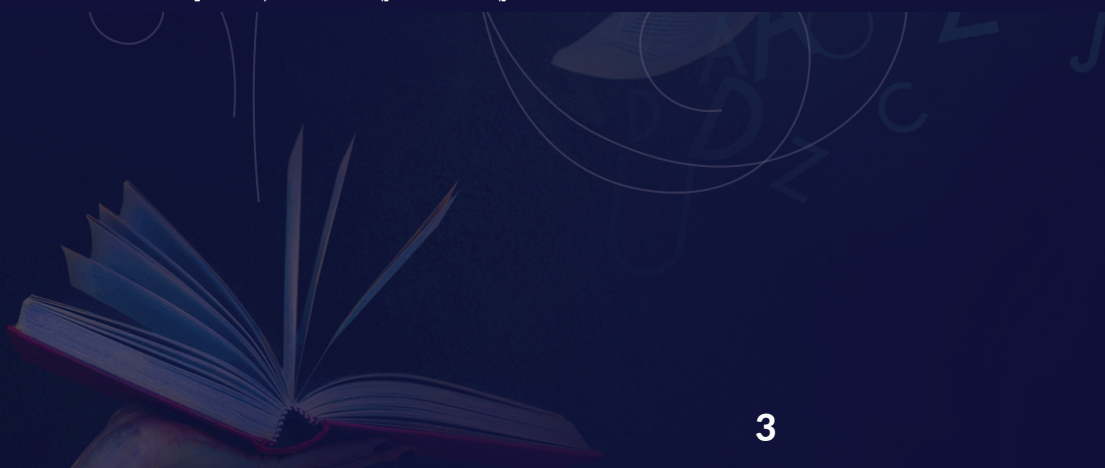
8:00 - 8:30 pm: Zoom Meeting: The Writer's Room*

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17

"A Little Romance: Reading Chekhov to Understand Love"

A **Master Class** with *Lincoln in the Bardo*'s **GEORGE SAUNDERS**: In this class, we'll first read, in advance, Chekhov's masterpiece, "The Lady with the Pet Dog." Then, in a virtual format, Booker-Prize winning author Saunders will offer us his take on the story, as he has done since 1997 in his class on the Russian short story in translation, offered to his MFA students – some of the best young writers in America. At the end, we'll have a chance to dive even deeper into this story, through an open Q&A session. Paying attendees will receive a Zoom invitation days before the event goes live. Saunders rarely teaches a Master Class outside of the University but he joins us for this special Reimagined event.

7:30 - 8:30 pm (\$10. Pay what you can. Donate for more events like this.)



Tales of a Different World

Emily St. John Mandel & Jenny Offill with Marion Winik as moderator

EMILY ST. JOHN MANDEL's five novels include *The Glass Hotel* and *Station Eleven*, which was a finalist for a National Book Award and the PEN/Faulkner Award and has been translated into thirty-two languages. She lives in New York City with her husband and daughter.



www.emilymandel.com

JENNY OFFILL is the author of the novels *Last Things* (a New York Times Notable Book of the Year and a finalist for the L.A. Times First Book Award); *Dept. of Speculation*, which was shortlisted for the Folio Prize, the Pen Faulkner Award, and the International Dublin Award; and most recently *Weather*, an instant New York Times Bestseller. She lives in upstate New York and teaches at Syracuse University and in the low residency program at Queens University.



www.jennyoffill.com

MARION WINIK is a University of Baltimore professor and the author of *The Big Book of the Dead* and winner of the 2019 Towson Prize for Literature. Among her ten other books are *First Comes Love* and *Above Us Only Sky*. Her award-winning Bohemian Rhapsody column appears monthly at Baltimore Fishbowl, and her essays have been published in The New York Times Magazine, The Sun, and elsewhere. A board member of the National Book Critics Circle, she writes book reviews for People, Newsday, The Washington Post, and Kirkus Reviews; she hosts The Weekly Reader podcast at WYPR. She was a commentator on NPR for fifteen years; her honors include an NEA Fellowship in Creative Nonfiction.



www.marionwinik.com

Terrance Hayes: A Poet of These Times - *How We Breathe* with Clint Smith as moderator

TERRANCE HAYES is the author of six poetry collections: *American Sonnets for My Past And Future Assassin*, a finalist for the National Book Award, National Book Critics Circle Award, and TS Eliot Prize; *How to Be Drawn*; *Lighthead*, winner of the 2010 National Book Award for poetry; *Muscular Music*, recipient of the Kate Tufts Discovery Award; *Hip Logic*, winner of the 2001 National Poetry Series, and *Wind in a Box*. His prose collection, *To Float In The Space Between: Drawings and Essays in Conversation with Etheridge Knight*, was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award and winner of the Pegasus Award for Poetry Criticism. Library of Congress recently awarded him the Rebekah Johnson Bobbitt National Prize for Poetry for *American Sonnets*. Hayes has received fellowships from the MacArthur Foundation, Guggenheim Foundation, and Whiting Foundation, and is a professor of English at New York University.



www.terrancehayes.com

CLINT SMITH is a staff writer at The Atlantic and the author of the poetry collection *Counting Descent*. The book won the 2017 Literary Award for Best Poetry Book from the Black Caucus of the American Library Association and was a finalist for an NAACP Image Award. He has received fellowships from New America, the Emerson Collective, the Art For Justice Fund, Cave Canem, and the National Science Foundation. His writing has been published in The New Yorker, The New York Times Magazine, Poetry Magazine, The Paris Review and elsewhere. Born and raised in New Orleans, he received his B.A. in English from Davidson College and his Ph.D. in Education from Harvard University.



www.clintsmithiii.com

"A Little Romance Reading Chekhov to Understand Love" - A Master Class with George Saunders

GEORGE SAUNDERS is the author of a novel, four collections of short stories, a novella, and a book of essays. His long-awaited novel (and most recent book), *Lincoln in the Bardo*, was published in 2017 and helped him earn the Man Booker Prize. Saunders's collection, *Tenth of December*, was the winner of the 2014 Story Prize and the 2014 Folio Prize. The recipient of a 2006 MacArthur Foundation Genius grant, his work appears regularly in *The New Yorker*, *GQ*, and *Harpers Magazine*, and has appeared in the *O'Henry*, *Best American Short Story*, *Best Non-Required Reading*, and *Best American Travel Writing* anthologies. He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and was named one of the 100 Most Influential People in the World by *TIME Magazine* in 2013.



www.georgesaundersbooks.com

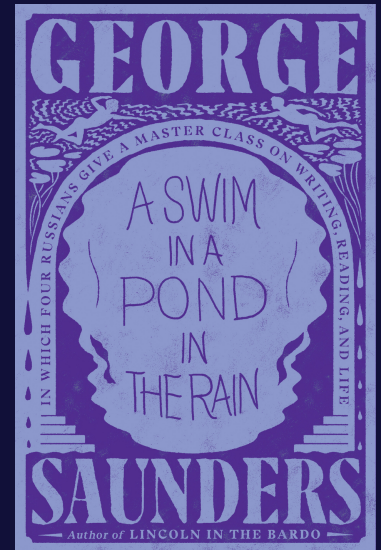
"With his concise, unorthodox, and daring work, [Saunders] proves that the true subversives are not those who shout. They are those with the insight and mastery to show us a world that seems hilariously impossible and horrifyingly likely at the same time."

—*Telegraph*



SWIM IN A POND IN THE RAIN

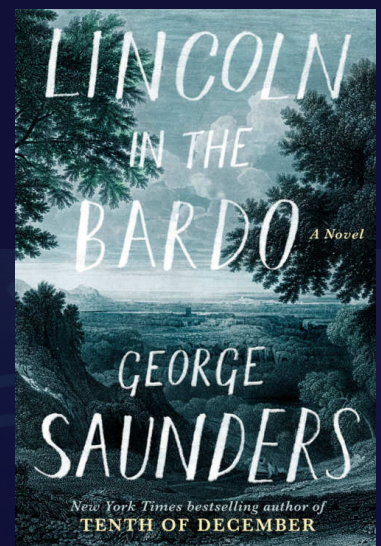
In *A Swim in a Pond in the Rain*, George Saunders guides the reader through seven classic Russian short stories he's been teaching for twenty years as a professor in the prestigious Syracuse University graduate MFA creative writing program. Paired with stories by Chekhov, Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Gogol, these essays are intended for anyone interested in how fiction works and why it's more relevant than ever in these turbulent times. Saunders approaches each of these stories technically yet accessible and through them explains how narrative functions; why we stay immersed in a story and why we resist it; and the bedrock virtues a writer must foster. For the process of writing, Saunders reminds us, is as much a craft as it is a quality of openness and a willingness to see the world through new eyes. Funny, frank, and rigorous, *A Swim in a Pond in the Rain* ultimately shows how great fiction can change a person's life and become a benchmark of one's moral and ethical beliefs.



LINCOLN IN THE BARDO (Novel, 2017)

"This really stood out because of its innovation – its very different styling and the way in which it paradoxically brought to life these not-quite-dead souls in this other world." –Lola Young, *Man Booker Prize Judge*

In his long-awaited first novel, American master George Saunders delivers his most original, transcendent, and moving work yet. Unfolding in a graveyard over the course of a single night, narrated by a dazzling chorus of voices, *Lincoln in the Bardo* is a literary experience unlike any other – for no one but Saunders could conceive it.



SATURDAY, MARCH 20: DAY-LONG PROGRAM

10:00 am – 5:30 pm EST through Zoom Webinar

(A singular link to be utilized the entire day except for The Writer's Room with Nikky Finney. Visit Current Events at citylitproject.org.)

BALTIMORE'S
18TH ANNUAL



Reimagined

10:00AM - 12:00PM by ZOOM

One-on-One 30 Minute Critique Sessions with Rosalia Scalia, Karen Houppert, Bret McCabe, Rebekah Kirkman, Laura Ballou, and Chelsea Fetzer (\$10)

<https://clf2021-edit-critique.eventbrite.com>
Fiction. Memoir. Creative Nonfiction. Poetry. Screenplay.

Guidelines: *Five pages of poetry OR prose*
Double-spaced | 12 pt. font | 1 inch margin
Numbered pages | Name must be included

10:00AM - 11:00AM

FEATURED OPENING EVENT

The Wolf You Feed

Join novelists **BRANDON HOBSON**, National Book Award Finalist (*Where the Dead Sit Talking*) and **KELLI JO FORD**, debut novel-in-stories, *Crooked Hallelujah* in a conversation about their accomplished works, and learn the strife of stricken families and bonds that form between generations, mother and daughter, and the legacy of family. Brandon's novel *The Removed* is steeped in Cherokee myth and history, a story of "calcified grief", a fractured family reckoning with the tragedy of a son's death from police violence. Kelli Jo's debut novel-in-stories where a young Cherokee woman tries to break a generational cycle of broken families while finding strength in an enduring bond with her mother. The session title is based on an old Cherokee saying about the battle between two wolves that exists inside each of us. A grandson asks his grandfather which wolf wins. The elder gently replies, "The one you feed." **Tyrese Coleman**, author of *How We Sit* will moderate.

11:00AM - 12:30PM

ReThinking How We Do Story: Real Talk About Craft and the Changing/Unchanging Landscape of Writing & Publishing

A 90-minute craft intensive about the changing dynamics of craft as we've been taught - from structure to plot to point of view. Learn from authors who dare you to revisit the elements of

fiction; to unlearn and relearn how to reimagine the story you mean to tell. What does it mean to boldly examine your own work which may exist outside of the cultural norms, and who does that norm serve anyway? The year 2020 may have further exposed racial inequities and upended our sense of normalcy but it also cast a closer look at who gets to tell and own the story. Tune in to a conversation that will awaken and challenge you. This session includes the changing/unchanging landscape of the publishing industry, what it means for people not readily represented in the profession, and how to prepare a manuscript so it gets 'seen'. Panelists include **JENNIFER BAKER** (*Everyday People: The Color of Life*), **MATTHEW SALETTES** (*Craft in the Real World*), **FELICIA ROSE CHAVEZ** (*The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop*), and **COURTNEY MAUM** (*Before and After the Book Deal*) with **Susan Muaddi Darraj** moderating.

1:00PM - 2:00PM

THE MATTERING OF WORDS: A Reading & Talk with Poet Nikky Finney

NIKKY FINNEY reflects on the past year, the necessity of poetry, and the importance of historical context in understanding the world we live in. Nikky won The Sewanee Review's 2020 Aiken Taylor Award for Modern American Poetry and is the recipient of the 2020 Wallace Stevens Award, a \$100,000-lifetime achievement honor presented by the Academy of American Poets. Academy judges praised Finney for her "fierce moral conviction" and as a bard "for the African diaspora." Her latest collection of poems is *Love Child's Hotbed of Occasional Poetry*, a twenty-first-century paean to the sterling love songs humming throughout four hundred years of Black American life. Poet **Saida Agostini** will moderate this session. A reading, commentary, and audience Q & A.

One-on-One 30-Minute Editorial Critique Sessions

featuring



Rosalia
Scalia



Karen
Houppert



Bret
McCabe



Rebekah
Kirkman



Laura
Ballou



Chelsea
Fetzer



Register at citylitproject.org

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

ROSALIA SCALIA

Genre: Fiction

Zoom meet, weather permitted outdoor masked meet

Rosalia Scalia is the author of the forthcoming story collection, *Stumbling Toward Grace*, set to be published in Nov. 2021. Her fiction has appeared or is forthcoming in *Broken Plate*, *Big Muddy*, *The Oklahoma Review*, *North Atlantic Review*, *Notre Dame Review*, *The Portland Review*, and *Quercus Review*, among many others. She holds an MA in writing from Johns Hopkins University and is a Maryland State Arts Council Independent Artist's Award recipient. She won the Editor's Select award from *Willow Review* and her short story in *Pebble Lake* was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She lives in Baltimore with her family.

www.rosaliascalia.com

Twitter: @rscalia

Instagram: @citygirlro

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Rosalia-Scalia-184872285263736>

KAREN HOUPPERT

Genre: Creative Nonfiction, Fiction

Zoom Meet

Manuscripts requested in advance

Karen Houppert is Director of the M.A. in Writing Program at Johns Hopkins. She was a contributing writer for The Washington Post magazine and now freelances for many magazines, covering social and political issues. A former staff writer for The Village Voice, she has won awards for her coverage, including a 1991 National Women's Political Caucus Award for feature writing, a 2003 Newswomen's Club of New York "Front Page Award," a 2011 Council on Contemporary Families Media Award for Print, and Maryland/DC/Delaware Press Association Award—as well as bringing in 18 MDCC journalism awards for her staff while she served as editor in chief of Baltimore City Paper. She was twice an ASME National Magazine Award finalist and was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2016 for her essay "The Heart is a Lonely Hunter, Interrupted." She has won numerous fellowships, grants and residencies including a John Jay/H.F. Guggenheim Reporting Fellow, a John Jay Public Welfare Reporting Fellow, a Kaiser Media Fellow, multiple Nation Institute Investigative grants, among others. She's the author of three nonfiction books, a contributor to five, and co-author of the Obie-award winning play "Boys in the Basement" based on her trial coverage of a rape in Glen Ridge, New Jersey.

www.karenhouppert.net

Twitter: @karenhouppert

Instagram: @karenhouppert

BRET MCCABE

Genre: Creative Nonfiction

Zoom meet, weather permitting, outdoor and masked meet, phone call

Manuscripts requested in advance

Bret McCabe has been deeply hanging out with people as an arts writer, critic, and editor for nearly 25 years. His work has appeared in the Baltimore City Paper, Dallas Observer, BmoreArt, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, among other magazines, newspapers, and websites. He was a 2010 finalist for the Nieman Foundation for Journalism Arts & Culture Fellowship and a 2010 fellow at the NEA Arts Journalism Institute in Classical Music and Opera at Columbia University. He is the senior humanities writer at the Johns Hopkins Magazine.

www.bretmccabe.com

Twitter: @bretmcbret

Instagram: @bretmcbret

REBEKAH KIRKMAN

Genre: Creative Nonfiction, Memoir

Zoom meet, a phone call or an email session

Manuscripts requested in advance

Rebekah Kirkman is the managing editor of *BmoreArt*. She was previously the visual arts editor at the Baltimore City Paper. She has done editing work for Jewish Currents, The Appeal, Press Press Baltimore, and other publications and organizations. Her cultural criticism, reporting, essays, and poetry have been published in the Baltimore Beat, Baltimore Fishbowl, The Outline, and elsewhere. Rebekah Kirkman is the managing editor of *BmoreArt*.

Twitter: @rebekahkirkman

Instagram: @slidingdice

CHELSEA LEMON FETZER

Genre: Poetry, Fiction

Zoom meet or by phone

Manuscripts requested in advance

Chelsea Lemon Fetzer holds an MFA in Fiction from Syracuse University. Her fiction and poetry have appeared in journals such as *Callaloo*, *Tin House*, *Mississippi Review*, and *Minnesota Review*. Her essay "Speck" appears in *The Beiging of America: Personal Narratives about being Mixed Race in the 21st Century*. She is a 2019 Rubys recipient for the Literary Arts. Fetzer currently teaches literature and creative writing at the University of Baltimore. She serves as vice chair on the board of CityLit Project and as head editor of *Little Patuxent Review*, a literary and arts journal that publishes creative work from the MidAtlantic region and beyond.

www.littlepatuxentreview.org

LAURA BALLOU

Genre: Screenplays, Plays

Zoom meet, by email, by phone

Manuscript requested in advance

Laura Ballou, as a writer and educator has worked in the public school system for the past twelve years, witnessing many of the issues today's youth encounter in their daily lives. She's co written a teen sci-fi/socially conscious TV series and a feature screenplay on *Mary Magdalene* with Emmy Award Winning Director, Mary Maderias. She graduated with a BA in Political Science and History at the University of Texas. She earned her teacher's certification at the University of Alaska and a Professional Certificate in Screenwriting from UCLA. She's a Northern Virginia Writing Project teacher consultant at George Mason University and received her script supervising training with Kimberley Roper in Los Angeles. Her screenplays have placed and won various film festivals and screenwriting competitions, notably, best screenplay at the Rising Above Film Festival, second round placement at the Austin Film Festival, finalist at the LA Live Film Festival, best screenplay at the Snowdance Film Awards, long list selection at the UK Film Festival, a semi-finalist at the Shutter Speed Film Festival, a quarterfinalist at the Page International Screenplay Competition and official selection in the WIFV Spotlight on Screenwriters Catalogue.

Laura is part of a movement to bring the Latino community of creatives to the forefront of Hollywood's series television. Her Puerto Rican heritage, faith, love of history, teaching experiences, and living and traveling around the world as a military spouse has been the inspiration for her writing. She writes to offer audiences fresh, new experiences in hopes that they can better understand themselves and others.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/lauraiballou

Twitter: @LauraBallou3

Instagram: lauraiballou

The Wolf You Feed

featuring



**Brandon
Hobson**

moderated by



**Kelli Jo
Ford**



**Tyrese
Coleman**



CITYLIT
PROJECT

BALTIMORE'S
18TH ANNUAL



Reimagined

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

The Wolf You Feed: *Love, Empathy & Truth*

BRANDON HOBSON is the author of *The Removed*, *Where The Dead Sit Talking*, which was a finalist for the 2018 National Book Award, and other books. His writing has appeared in *McSweeney's*, *Conjunctions*, *NOON*, *American Short Fiction*, and elsewhere. He is an assistant professor of creative writing at New Mexico State University and also teaches at the Institute of American Indian Arts. Hobson is an enrolled citizen of the Cherokee Nation Tribe of Oklahoma.

www.brandanhobson.com

KELLI JO FORD's debut novel-in-stories *Crooked Hallelujah* was longlisted for the PEN/Hemingway Award for Debut Novel, The Story Prize, the Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction, and The Center for Fiction's First Novel Prize. She is the recipient of The Paris Review's 2019 Plimpton Prize, the Everett Southwest Literary Award, and a Native Arts & Cultures Foundation National Artist Fellowship. She teaches writing at the Institute of American Indian Arts. She is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation.

www.kellijoford.com

Instagram: @kelli_jo_ford

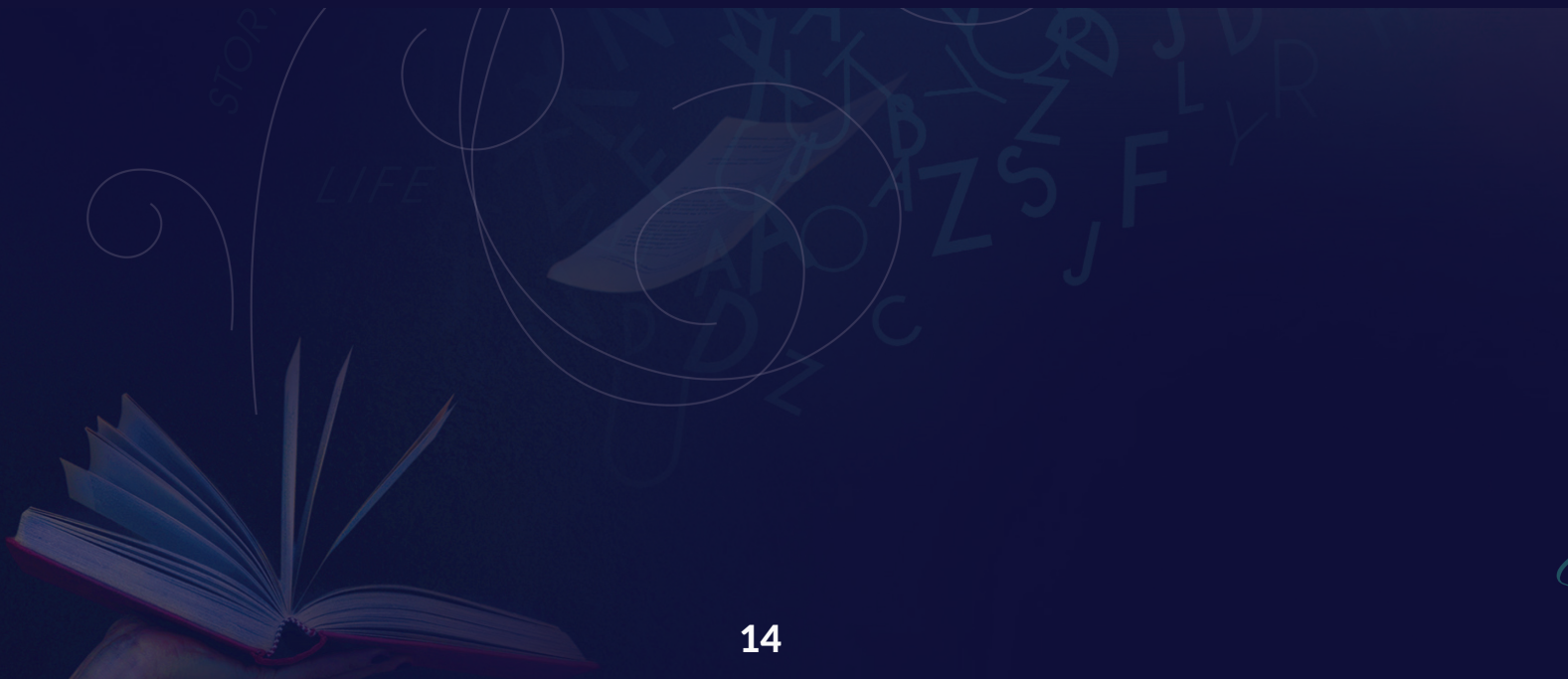
Twitter: @kellijoford

TYRESE COLEMAN is the author of *How to Sit*, a 2019 Pen Open Book Award finalist published with Mason Jar Press in 2018. She is also the writer of the forthcoming book, *Spectacle*, with One World, an imprint of Penguin Random House. Writer, wife, mother, attorney, and writing instructor, she is a contributing editor at Split Lip Magazine and occasionally teaches at American University. Her essays and stories have appeared in several publications and noted in Best American Essays and the Pushcart Anthology. She is an alumni of the Writing Program at Johns Hopkins University.

www.tyresecoleman.com

Instagram: @tylachellecto

Twitter: @tylachellecto



ReThinking How We Do Story

Real Talk About Craft and the Changing/Unchanging Landscape of Writing & Publishing



featuring



Jennifer
Baker



Matthew
Salesses



Felicia
Rose
Chavez



Courtney
Maum



Susan
Muaddi
Darraj

moderated by

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

JENNIFER BAKER is a publishing professional of almost 20 years, creator/host of the Minorities in Publishing podcast, and faculty member of the MFA program in creative nonfiction at Bay Path University. In 2019, she was named Publishers Weekly Superstar for her contributions to inclusion and representation in publishing. Jennifer is also the editor of the BIPOC-short story anthology *Everyday People: The Color of Life* (Atria Books, 2018) and the author of the forthcoming novel *Forgive Me Not* (Putnam BFYR, 2022). Her fiction, nonfiction, and criticism has appeared in various print and online publications. Jennifer recently accepted a position as Senior Editor - Amistad Books at HarperCollins Publishers.

www.jennifernbaker.com

Twitter: @jbakernyc

Instagram: @jbakernyc

COURTNEY MAUM is the author of the novels *Costalegre* (a GOOP book club pick and one of Glamour Magazine's top books of the decade), *I Am Having So Much Fun Here Without You* and *Touch* (a New York Times Editor's Choice and NPR Best Book of the Year selection), the popular guidebook *Before and After the Book Deal: A writer's guide to finishing, publishing, promoting, and surviving your first book*, and the forthcoming memoir, *The Year of the Horses*. A nominee for the Joyce Carol Oates Prize, Courtney's writing has been widely published in such outlets as the New York Times, and O, the Oprah Magazine, and her short story *This is Not Your Fault* was turned into an Audible Original at Amazon. Courtney is the founder of the collaborative retreat program, **The Cabins** and she has a creativity advice newsletter.

www.courtneymaum.com

Twitter: @cmaum

Instagram: @cbmaum

SUSAN MUADDI DARRAJ's short story collection, *A Curious Land: Stories from Home*, was named the winner of the AWP Grace Paley Prize for Short Fiction, judged by Jaime Manrique. It also won the 2016 Arab American Book Award, a 2016 American Book Award, and was shortlisted for a Palestine Book Award. Her previous short story collection, *The Inheritance of Exile*, was published in 2007 by University of Notre Dame Press. In 2018, she was named a Ford Fellow by USA Artists. Susan also is a two-time recipient of an Individual Artist Award from the Maryland State Arts Council. She has also been awarded a Ruby's Artist Grant from the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance and a grant from the Sustainable Arts Foundation. In 2019, she launched the viral #TweetYourThobe social media campaign to promote Palestinian culture. In January 2020, Capstone Books launched her debut children's chapter book series, *Farah Rocks*, about a smart, brave Palestinian American girl named Farah Hajjar.

www.susanmuaddidarraj.com

Twitter: @susandarraj

Instagram: @susandarraj

The Mattering of Words

featuring

**Nikky
Finney**



moderated
by

**Saida
Agostini**



1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.



**CITYLIT
PROJECT**

BALTIMORE'S
18TH ANNUAL



Reimagined

A Reading & Talk with Poet Nikky Finney

NIKKY FINNEY reflects on the past year, the necessity of poetry, the importance of historical context, and a reckoning in understanding the world we live in. Poet **Saida Agostini** will moderate this session. A reading, commentary, and audience Q & A.

Public Program: Zoom Webinar:

1:00 - 2:00 pm

<https://marylandlibraries.zoom.us/j/97990345929?pwd=cmFabHY1bWRyRIE3dUtNbjJUMWs3Zz09>

NIKKY FINNEY was born by the sea in South Carolina and raised during the Civil Rights, Black Power, and Black Arts Movements. She is the author of *On Wings Made of Gauze; Rice; The World Is Round*; and *Head Off & Split*, which won the National Book Award for Poetry in 2011. Her latest collection of poems is *Love Child's Hotbed of Occasional Poetry*. *Love Child's Hotbed of Occasional Poetry* is a twenty-first-century paean to the sterling love songs humming throughout four hundred years of black American life. National Book Award winner Nikky Finney's fifth collection contains lighthouse poems, narrative hotbeds, and treasured artifacts—copper coins struck from a new matrix for poetry, one that testifies from the witness stand and punctuates the occasional lyric within a new language of “docu-poetry.”

Nikky won *The Sewanee Review's* 2020 Aiken Taylor Award for Modern American Poetry and is the recipient of the 2020 Wallace Stevens Award, a \$ 100,000-lifetime achievement honor presented by the Academy of American Poets. Academy judges praised Finney for her “fierce moral conviction” and as a bard “for the African diaspora.”

www.nikkyfinney.net

SAIDA AGOSTINI is a queer Afro-Guyanese poet whose work explores the ways that Black folks harness mythology to enter the fantastic. Her first collection of poems, *just let the dead in*, was a finalist for the Center of African American Poetry & Poetics' 2020 Book Prize, as well as the New Issues Poetry Prize. Her first chapbook, *STUNT* (Neon Hemlock, October 2020), explores the history of Nellie Jackson, a Black woman entrepreneur who operated a brothel for sixty years in Natchez, Mississippi. Saida's poetry can be found in *Barrelhouse Magazine*, the Black Ladies Brunch Collective's anthology, *Not Without Our Laughter*, and other publications. A Cave Canem Graduate Fellow, Saida has been awarded honors and support for her work by the Watering Hole and Blue Mountain Center, as well as a 2018 Rubys Grant funding travel to Guyana to support the completion of her first manuscript.

www.sadiaagostini.com

2:00PM - 3:00PM

Who's Missing? & Who's Here Now? Children's and Young Adult Literature

Three authors shed light on the many stories framed either around a historical context or referencing omission from the literary landscape. Join **RANDI PINK** (Angel in Greenwood), **SAADIA FARUQI**, **LAURA SHO VAN** (authors of *A Place at the Table*) in a discussion about writing as activism; the importance of representation; why it's important to tell this story; and what other stories we need to see in the world. **LaTrisha Milton**, Young Adult Services Coordinator for the Enoch Pratt Free Library will moderate.

3:00PM - 4:15PM

The Writer's Room*: Poet to Poet with Nikky Finney

Zoom Meeting: **Please register with Eventbrite [here](https://clf2021-nikky-finney.eventbrite.com).**
<https://clf2021-nikky-finney.eventbrite.com>

4:15PM - 5:30PM

The 'State' of Baltimore: Where We Stand

Panelists discuss critical issues in Baltimore with the intention of shedding light, along with a broader view of justice, equality, art, and dignity in today's Baltimore. Expect a lively discussion with co-editor **JOSHUA DAVIS** (*Baltimore Revisited, Stories of Inequality and Resistance in a U.S. City*), reporter **BRANDON SODERBERG** (*I Got A Monster: The Rise and Fall of America's Most Corrupt Police Squad* – co-written with Baynard Woods), author and cultural worker **ALANAH NICHOLE DAVIS**, with moderator **NNEKA N'NAMDI**, whose lived experience gave birth to Fight Blight Bmore, a social and environmental justice tool for residents to identify, report and track blight.

The Writer's Room*

After the public program, which will be held as a Zoom Webinar, those attending who wish to engage further with the featured authors about craft should register for The Writer's Room through Eventbrite. The Writer's Room is a new Festival highlight designed to engage festival attendees, who are also writers, in an informal conversation with the featured guest authors. Participants are encouraged to come prepared with questions. They will receive a link to attend an informal Zoom Meeting through Eventbrite where featured authors will join attendees virtually face to face. Featured guest artists are open to discussing different aspects of writing including questions about craft, research, writing process, challenges, and questions about publication.

The Zoom Meeting link for The Writer's Room will also be shared in the chat during the main talk.

The Village

CityLit Project recognizes these organizations as part of its Village, local, regional and state-wide organizations that serve readers and writers. CityLit supports these organizations by displaying their information at signature events and on our website. We realize many individuals and organizations ... bookstores, entrepreneurs, reading series, and more — do their level best to provide services, information, and opportunities to grow and enhance the lives of poets and writers. This is our way of supporting them and amplifying their work.

<https://www.citylitproject.org/about-us/the-village/>

- Artist U
- A Revolutionary Summer
- The Baltimore Review
- Doerr&Co
- Furious Flower Poetry Center
- Howard County Poetry & Literature Society
- Iceland Readers Retreat
- Libraries Without Borders
- Maryland Writer's Association
- Mason Creative Writing
- Midwest Writing & Editing
- The Modell Lyric
- Passager
- Pen Parentis
- Poe Baltimore, The Edgar Allan Poe House & Museum
- The Poet & The Poem from The Library of Congress
- The Inner Loop
- Writers & Words
- Yellow Arrow Publishing
- Zora's Den

The CityLit Festival is supported by these partners and sponsors:



Who's Missing? & Who's Here Now?

Children's and Young Adult Literature



CITYLIT
PROJECT

BALTIMORE'S
18TH ANNUAL
**city
lit
fest
ival**

Reimagined

featuring



**Randi
Pink**



**Saadia
Faruqi**



**Laura
Shovan**

moderated by



**LaTrisha
Milton**

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

RANDI PINK is the young adult fiction author of *Angel of Greenwood*, *Girls Like Us*, and *Into White*. She lives in the South and teaches creative writing and visits schools, libraries and colleges throughout the country. She lives with her two children and rescue dogs.

www.randipink.com

Twitter: @randi_pink

Instagram: @randi_pink

SAADIA FARUQI is a Pakistani American author, essayist, and interfaith activist. She writes the children's early reader series "Yasmin" published by Capstone and other books for children, including middle-grade novels "A Place At The Table" (HMH/Clarion 2020) co-written with Laura Shovan, and "A Thousand Questions" (Harper Collins 2020). She lives in Houston, TX with her family.

www.saadiafaruqi.com

Twitter: @saadiafaruqi

Instagram: @saadiafaruqi

LAURA SHO VAN is an educator, editor, and poet-in-the-schools. Her chapbook, *Mountain, Log, Salt and Stone*, won the inaugural Harriss Poetry Prize and her poems have appeared in many journals and anthologies. Laura edited *Life in Me Like Grass on Fire: Love Poems for the Maryland Writers Association* and co-edited *Voices Fly: An Anthology of Exercises and Poems* from the Maryland State Arts Council Artists-in-Residence Program, for which she is a longtime teacher. The Last Fifth Grade of Emerson Elementary, Laura's novel-in-verse for children, received many honors including the Cybils Award for poetry, NCTE Notable Verse Novel, Bank Street Best Children's Book of the Year, and the ILA-CBC Children's Choice Reading List. Laura's other novels for children include *Takedown*, selected by Junior Library Guild, *PJ Our Way*, and the ALA's Amelia Bloomer Project List, and *A Place at the Table*, a Sydney Taylor Notable Book, co-written with Saadia Faruqi.

www.laurashovan.com

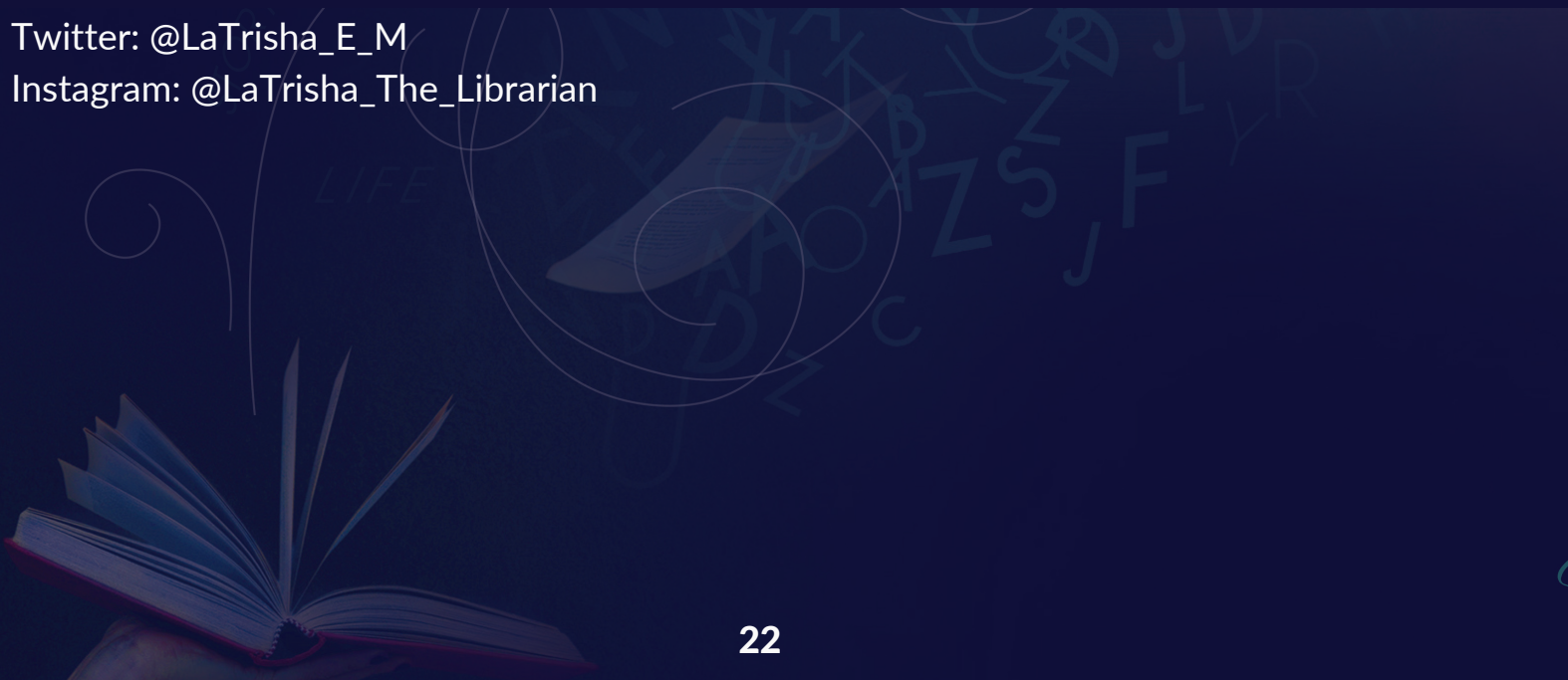
Twitter: @laurashovan

Instagram: @laurashovan

LaTRISHA MILTON is the current Young Adult Services Coordinator for the Enoch Pratt Free Library. She is originally from Baton Rouge, La but has been in Baltimore, Maryland the last 4 years. She leads in several arenas for the library, including the introduction of Young Adult Writers LIVE! in 2020, One Book Baltimore, Books for the Beast and many other programs geared towards the teen audience in Baltimore City. She is also a trainer for the Maryland State Library Associates Training Institute. LaTrisha serves as the moderator.

Twitter: @LaTrisha_E_M

Instagram: @LaTrisha_The_Librarian



The Writer's Room

Poet to Poet with

Nikky
Finney

Register at citylitproject.org



3:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.



NIKKY FINNEY was born by the sea in South Carolina and raised during the Civil Rights, Black Power, and Black Arts Movements. She is the author of *On Wings Made of Gauze*; *Rice*; *The World Is Round*; and *Head Off & Split*, which won the National Book Award for Poetry in 2011. Her latest collection of poems is *Love Child's Hotbed of Occasional Poetry*. *Love Child's Hotbed of Occasional Poetry* is a twenty-first-century paean to the sterling love songs humming throughout four hundred years of black American life. National Book Award winner Nikky Finney's fifth collection contains lighthouse poems, narrative hotbeds, and treasured artifacts—copper coins struck from a new matrix for poetry, one that testifies from the witness stand and punctuates the occasional lyric within a new language of “docu-poetry.”

Nikky won *The Sewanee Review's* 2020 Aiken Taylor Award for Modern American Poetry and is the recipient of the 2020 Wallace Stevens Award, a \$ 100,000-lifetime achievement honor presented by the Academy of American Poets. Academy judges praised Finney for her “fierce moral conviction” and as a bard “for the African diaspora.”

www.nikkyfinney.net

*After the public program, which will be held as a Zoom Webinar, those attending who wish to engage further with the featured authors about craft should register for **The Writer's Room** through Eventbrite [here](#). The Writer's Room is a new Festival highlight designed to engage festival attendees, who are also writers, in an informal conversation with the featured guest authors. Participants are encouraged to come prepared with questions. They will receive a link to attend an informal Zoom Meeting through Eventbrite where featured authors will join attendees virtually face to face. Featured guest artists are open to discussing different aspects of writing including questions about craft, research, writing process, challenges, and questions about publication. This feature is designed to be an added value for invested poets and writers.

Note: The Zoom Meeting link for The Writer's Room will be shared in the chat during the main talk.

What's the difference between a Zoom webinar and a Zoom meeting?

Zoom Webinar: Featured authors cannot see attendees (**Cameras off: Only the featured author can be seen.**)

Zoom Meeting: Featured authors join attendees where everyone who attends can be seen. (**Cameras on: Everyone in attendance can be seen unless you turn off your video.**)

The 'State' of Baltimore



featuring



Brandon
Soderberg



Joshua
Davis



Alanah
Nichole
Davis

moderated by



Nneka
N'namdi



4:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

BRANDON SODERBERG is a reporter based in Baltimore who reports on police, drugs, and protest. He is also the coauthor of "I Got a Monster: The Rise and Fall of America's Most Corrupt Police Squad." His work has appeared in The Washington Post, The Intercept, Vice, the Appeal and many other publications.

igotamonster.com

Twitter: @notrivia

Instagram: @notrivia

JOSHUA CLARK DAVIS is an assistant professor of United States history at the University of Baltimore focusing on social movements, policing, capitalism, and African American history. He is co-editor of the essay collection *Baltimore Revisited: Stories of Inequality and Resistance in a U.S. City* and author of *From Head Shops to Whole Foods: The Rise and Fall of Activist Entrepreneurs*. As a public historian, Joshua works to increase access to history outside the classroom. Josh has written for The Washington Post, Slate, Jacobin, and The Nation, and his work has been featured in Time, Slate, Chronicle of Higher Education, The Philadelphia Inquirer, and USA Today. His research has been supported by fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Fulbright Scholar Program, and the Robert W. Deutsch Foundation's Rubys Award.

Joshuaclarkdavis.com

Twitter: @JoshClarkDavis

ALANAH NICHOLE DAVIS is a mother, essayist, cultural worker, social designer, and philanthropist from The Bronx, NY based in Baltimore MD. Davis is a candidate for her Master of Arts in Social Design at Maryland Institute College of Art and is affectionately referred to as Baltimore's Godmother for her ability to foster, support, love, and build everything she touches. Her written witticisms surrounding love, race, womanhood, and being a human have gone viral online in perfect millennial fashion and are also in print to match her old soul.

www.alanahasenteredthechat.com

Twitter: @alanahsays

Instagram: @alanahasenteredthechat

NNEKA N'NAMDI is Baltimore-based entrepreneur engaged in social mission driven entrepreneurship and community wellness work. She endeavors to apply a mix of traditional African and modern African American social, economic and spiritual practices as a framework for living. As a member of The Living Well team, she curates community space for artistic, economic and social ventures. Skilled in creating healing spaces and teaching practical ways of managing trauma, Nneka and her sister Maya Onyango have created SisterGather, events for women of African descent to bond, heal and grow. Her study includes initiation in the practice of IFA, Principles of Trauma Informed Care as well as a Master's in Management with a specialization in Organizational Leadership. Her artistic experience includes West African dance with Sankofa Dance Theater, Dishibem, Urban Foli, Wombworks and #BaltimoreGirls. She is a graduate of two of Baltimore's most prestigious educational institutions: Baltimore Polytechnic Institute and Morgan State University. She lives in Upton with her two sons. Upton is one of Baltimore's most blighted neighborhoods and her lived experience there has given birth to Fight Blight Bmore, a social and environmental justice tool for residents to identify, report and track blight.

www.fightblightbmore.com

Twitter: @fightblightbmore

Instagram: @Blight2Bright



ADDITIONAL FEATURED SESSIONS

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24, MARCH 31 & APRIL 7

The Joy of Grief: Finding Life in Death

A Grief Writing Workshop with Gayle Danley & Kimberley Lynne

GAYLE DANLEY and **KIMBERLEY LYNNE**, two teachers guide participants through the processing of grief with the lamp of creative writing. Using poetry, fiction, and memoir prompts and guided meditation, the teachers will help students navigate the swamp of sorrow and travel on to nurturing healing. Both faculty members battle grief from the loss of loved ones but are not social workers or ministers.

6:00 - 7:30 pm

GAYLE DANLEY is the CEO of Poetry Pros, Former National and International Poetry Slam Champion, and the Maryland Library Association Poet of the Year.

gayledanleypoet.com



KIMBERLY LYNNE is a writer and a teacher. Over 40 of her plays have been produced and her ghost folklore novel published. She's taught screenwriting, playwriting and composition for seventeen years.

kimberleylynne.wordpress.com



FESTIVAL FINALE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31

Somewhere in the Reflection: A Visual Presentation curated by **Nia June, APoetNamedNate & Kirby Griffin**

In this session, film and poetry collide to explore the meaning of identity by holding a mirror to the maddening yet liberating process of self-discovery. Experience some of Baltimore's most captivating filmmakers and poets as they share their stories about race, gender, childhood, love, and freedom. Curated by Baltimore creatives poets **NIA JUNE**, **APOETNAMEDNATE** and photographer **KIRBY GRIFFIN**. Featuring the works of **Black Chakra**, **Sharayna Christmas**, **Gyasi Mitchell** & more!

7:30 - 9:00 pm

NIA JUNE is a Baltimore native, performer, author, filmmaker, educator, and dancer. Specializing in spoken-word, June has been the featured performer and guest speaker at events throughout the east coast. Some of which include Light City Baltimore, Artscape, and Art After Hours at the Baltimore Museum of Art. When June is not performing, she is teaching Dance and Poetry to youth through organizations such as Dew More Baltimore, Muse 360 Arts and Sensible Women Initiative. She has work published in *Grub Street Literary Magazine* vol. 67, *Obsidian: Literature and Arts in the African Diaspora* vol. 45.1, and the forthcoming issues of *Lullwater Review* and *FIYAH*. June's debut film, *A Black Girl's Country* featured in film festivals in Baltimore, MD, Washington D.C., Houston, TX, and Savannah, GA. In May 2020, June graduated from Towson University, where she was awarded the Presidential Scholarship from SWI for 'Excellence in Poetry.' Nia June was also recognized by Baltimore Magazine as Best Poet of Baltimore 2020. June's most recent project is a collaborative collection of poetry and photography with local cinematographer, Kirby Griffin. Their book, *Paper Trails of the Undying*, is an illustration of Baltimore's tenacious beauty. Nia June is a proud member of the Sensible Women Initiative Beta Chapter.



www.niajune.com

APoetNamedNate, a multifaceted, Black artist from Baltimore, Maryland, has a diverse artistic background. He is a poet, music producer, songwriter, creative director, and curator.

Known for his poetry productions, bringing both nationally ranked and amateur poets together, with a goal to create a space where poetry can be experienced authentically. His productions include "Midsummer Night Poetry", "Much Ado About Poetry", "Earth, Wind and Poetry", "Don't Be Late For Poetry", and co-producing "Baltimore Queens of Poetry" featuring some of the top poets in the world. Recently he released his first short film as the creative director and music producer for, "A Black Girl's Country" and his first book "Anticipational Love Poems" is set to come out in 2021.



www.apoetnamednate.com

KIRBY GRIFFIN is a cinematographer, director, and photographer from West Baltimore. As a child of the arts, Kirby pursued filmmaking in his early twenties after initially chasing the dream of being a performance artist, spoken word/acting - searching for the perfect outlet to express himself as a storyteller. In the wake of the DSLR era, he set his sights on cinematography in 2011, with the help of a friend and fellow artist Jerald Kerr, also known as Jay Mastermind. Both motivated outside of the academic structure, they began teaching themselves the art and craft of filmmaking by diving headfirst, purchasing their own equipment then filming, directing, and editing as much as possible. They came away with countless hours of study by way of literature, YouTube tutorials, lectures, networking, and a tremendous amount of trial and error, which proved essential.



www.kirbygriffindp.com

Instagram: @gyasimitchell



THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING LITERATURE

A Note from CityLit Project's Executive Director, Carla Du Pree:

One day in the winter of our years we will look back at 2020 and speak to where we were when As a poet of our times, Terrance Hayes so deftly reminds us, we don't have to be an expert but be a poet of witness. There's value in a public remembering. As the lone staff of CityLit Project with a committed board of five, we were set to produce one of the largest festivals in our organization's history, boasting over 20 sessions with over 80 poets and writers and a vibrant Literary Marketplace. While the physical and emotional challenges affected us greatly, and the racial reckoning of this country along with a global pandemic broke our spirits and just about did us in, the immense support of our literary community, including funders — local, regional and national, and individual donors like you — spoke to our worth.

We value this moment perhaps like none other, but most especially in this virtual setting. We fully recognize all of the poets and writers who deserve to be here. We applaud any and all authors whose books debuted this year and last. We are also thankful for the editors who volunteered their professional services: **Karen Houppert, Bret McCabe, Laura Ballou, Rebekah Kirkman, Chelsea Fetzer, and Rosalia Scalia.**

For now, *this* is what we were able to build, **CityLit Festival - Reimagined**: a virtual, monthlong celebration of the literary arts **for you.**

On a personal note, I remain forever thankful for a newly strengthened partnership with **Enoch Pratt Free Library** and for fellow cohort **Tracy Dimond**, Adult Services Coordinator, and for our CityLit Board, especially Board Chair **Dana Harris-Trovato** and Treasurer **Aditya Desai** for making this year's Festival a thing. We are committed more than ever to bring you the best. Come get what you need.



Contribute to CityLit

Help us continue offering free literary events to the Baltimore community and beyond.

[Donate now](#)

Stay informed

Sign up for our mailing list to stay up-to-date about CityLit news and events.

[Subscribe](#)

To support our work, please [click here to donate to CityLit Project.](#)



#citylitfest2021 | [@citylitproject](#) | [@citylitproject](#) | [CityLitProject](#)

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND VOLUNTEERS!

Thank you to **Insight180** — a boss, women-owned graphic design company in Ellicott City, MD

A HUGE shoutout to **Bethany Howell, Wendy Baird & Elizabeth Doubleday**

And a special thank you to **Eric Archibald** of Enoch Pratt Free Library

Festival Directory created by **CityLit Gladiators** extraordinaire: **Megan DeMatteo & Sylvia Fox**

PLEASE COMPLETE OUR EVALUATION FORM

Many have *no idea* how critical it is for small nonprofits like us to gather data for sufficient funding. More and more, we have to prove our impact and our reach. You matter in a huge way in determining what that looks like.

Please take a moment to fill out our evaluation form. Your feedback is also crucial in order to curate programming based on your wants and needs. We read every single word and include it in our ongoing conversations about what's next, what's possible, and what should be on our radar. More than anything, we listen, folks!

CityLit Festival Evaluation Form:

<https://tinyurl.com/CityLitFeedback>



#citylitfest2021 | @citylitproject | @citylitproject | CityLitProject