

THE
INVISIBLE
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ASIAN AMERICAN

telling our stories

PRESENTED BY



CityLit PROGRAM

May 2021

Baltimore
AAPI
Writer's
spotlight!

A very special **Thank You** to our sponsors including our newly awarded National Endowment for the Arts grant recently announced. The impact of your generosity will resonate In the literary arts community for years and with CitLit Project, forever.

OUR SPONSORS:



CITYLIT PRESENTS THE ~~INVISIBLE~~/INVINCIBLE ASIAN AMERICAN: TELLING OUR STORIES

CityLit Project is pleased to announce **The ~~invisible~~-Invincible Asian American: Telling Our Stories**, a virtual celebration of Asian American writers, poets, playwrights, and graphic storytellers. The special event series includes multi-genre panels on craft and publishing, and a spotlight on Baltimore Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) authors through a series of readings and interviews to be held throughout May, creating a platform of greater visibility.

Featuring:



Anjali Enjeti



Lisa Ko



Paisley Rekdal



Lawrence-Minh
Bui Davis



Jennifer Chang



Hannah Bae



James Han
Mattson



Hasanthika
Sirisena

re-imagining our history

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EDT via Zoom

This panel on craft features AAPI writers whose work builds on the literary and real histories of Asian America, and/or our ancestral homelands. Featuring: **Anjali Enjeti, Lisa Ko, Paisley Rekdal, Lawrence-Minh Bui Davis**, with **Aditya Desai** moderating. Audience Q&A follows the discussion. Read more on our website.

publishing asian voices

Wednesday, May 19, 2021

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EDT via Zoom

This multi-genre publishing panel is comprised of published AAPI writers of fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction who also serve in editorial roles at literary journals. Featuring: **Jennifer Chang, Hannah Bae, James Han Mattson, Hasanthika Sirisena** with **Jung Yun** moderating. Audience Q&A follows the discussion. Read more on our website.

CityLit has long championed the literary work of Asian American authors over the years, engaging in spirited conversations. Following a year of xenophobic rhetoric and violence throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, this in-development project was given a new urgency following the mass shooting in Atlanta. Along with the growing dissonance in this country towards the AAPI community, Maryland's Governor Hogan declared hate crimes targeting Asian Americans have more than doubled since 2018. CityLit Project introduces this new series that brings exciting new and contemporary voices in AAPI literature front and center as part of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

THE INVISIBLE INVINCIBLE

ASIAN AMERICAN

telling our stories

Re-Imagining Our Histories

Zoom Panel w/ Q&A

Tuesday, May 18

7:00 PM EDT



Anjali Enjeti



Lawrence-Minh
Bui Davis



Lisa Ko



Paisley Rekdal

A craft panel, Re-Imagining Our Histories featuring celebrated authors: Anjali Enjeti, Lisa Ko, Lawrence-Minh Bui Davis, and Paisley Rekdal whose works build on the literary and real histories of Asian America, and/or their ancestral homelands, and how they see their writing in conversation with these histories. An audience Q & A follows the session scheduled from 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EDT. A Zoom link will be sent at the point of registration. Short story author Aditya Desai will serve as the moderator.

PLEASE REGISTER AT [CITYLITPROJECT.ORG](https://citylitproject.org) TO RECEIVE A ZOOM LINK.

Anjali Enjeti is a former attorney and award-winning journalist based near Atlanta. She is the author of the essay collection *Southbound: Essays on Identity, Inheritance, and Social Change*, and the novel, *The Parted Earth*. Her writing about politics, social justice, and books has appeared in *Harper's BAZAAR*, *Mic*, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Washington Post*, *Al Jazeera*, *The Nation*, and elsewhere. She is the co-founder of *They See Blue Georgia*, an organization for South Asian Democrats, and teaches in the MFA program at Reinhardt University.

<https://anjalienjeti.com/>

Twitter: @AnjaliEnjeti

Instagram: @anjalienjeti

Lawrence-Minh Bùi Davis, PhD is Curator of Asian Pacific American Studies at the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center. He oversees the Smithsonian Literature + Museum Initiative, devoted to rethinking collective responsibility for what we write and read, and why. He serves as lead organizer for the Asian American Literature Festival, co-hosted by the Smithsonian, Library of Congress, and Poetry Foundation, and is a co-founder of the pop-up Center for Refugee Poetics. He is also founding Director of the arts antiprofit *The Asian American Literary Review* and editor-in-chief of its literary journal. He is currently ranked as the 9th best ice cream maker in human history.

Lisa Ko's first novel, *The Leavers*, was a national best-seller that won the PEN/Bellwether Prize for Socially Engaged Fiction and was a finalist for the National Book Award for Fiction and the PEN/Hemingway Award. Her short fiction has appeared in *Best American Short Stories* and her essays and nonfiction in *The New York Times*, *The Believer*, and elsewhere. She lives in New York City.

<http://lisa-ko.com>

Twitter: @iamlisako

Instagram: @iamlisako

Paisley Rekdal is the author of a book of essays, *The Night My Mother Met Bruce Lee*; a hybrid-genre photo-text entitled *Intimate*; and six books of poetry: *A Crash of Rhinos*; *Six Girls Without Pant*; *The Invention of the Kaleidoscope*; *Animal Eye*, winner of the UNT Rilke Prize; and *Imaginary Vessels*, which was a finalist for the 2018 Kingsley Tufts Prize, and *Nightingale*. Her book, *The Broken Country*, won the 2016 AWP Nonfiction Prize. Her newest work of nonfiction was published this year, *Appropriate: A Provocation*. Her work has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Fulbright Foundation, the Amy Lowell Poetry Traveling Scholarship Trust, and various state arts councils. Her poetry has been included in multiple editions of *The Best American Poetry* series, and she was guest editor for *Best American Poetry 2020*. She is Utah's poet laureate.

<http://www.paisleyrekdal.com>

Twitter: @PaisleyRekdal

Aditya Desai is a South Asian American writer and teacher living in Baltimore. He has served as the administrative coordinator for Baltimore Asian Resistance in Solidarity and member of the South Asian Rapid Response Initiative with Justice for Muslims Collective and worked with several organizations in the city that use art towards racial justice including the CityLit Project, Baltimore Youth Arts, and the Asian Pasifika Arts Collective. His stories and essays in literary publications and magazines including Tropics of Meta, Barrelhouse Magazine, The Rumpus, The Millions, and others. He is also co-host and producer of the podcast Diasporastan.

<http://adityadesaiwriter.com>

Twitter: @atwitty

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ASIAN AMERICAN

telling our stories

Publishing Asian Voices

Zoom Panel w/ Q&A

Wednesday, May 19

7:00 PM EDT



Hannah Bae



James Han
Mattson



Jennifer Chang



Hasanthika Sirisena

A publishing panel, Publishing Asian Voices featured at a time when Asians represent just 7% of the publishing industry. Authors Hannah Bae, Jennifer Chang, James Han Mattson, and Hasanthika Sirisena, who also serve in editorial roles at literary journals, discuss their considerations as writers when submitting their own work for publication, versus their considerations as editors when deciding what work to publish. An audience Q & A follows the session scheduled from 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm EDT. A Zoom link will be sent at the point of registration. Novelist Jung Yun will serve as the moderator.

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Hannah Bae is a Korean American freelance journalist and writer living in Brooklyn, NY. She is the 2020 nonfiction winner of the Rona Jaffe Foundation Writer's Award, which is supporting her memoir-in-progress about family estrangement, mental illness, childhood trauma, and cultural identity. She is an editor-at-large for the literary journal Pigeon Pages and a 2021 Peter Taylor Fellow for The Kenyon Review Writing Workshops. Her essays have appeared in Catapult, Slice Magazine, Bitch Media, and Pigeon Pages, among other publications. She is the recipient of recent fellowships from The Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow, Asian American Writers' Workshop, and The Poynter Institute. Her essay, "Survival Mode," was published in the anthology, *Don't Call Me Crazy: 33 Voices Start the Conversation About Mental Health*. She has worked full-time for organizations including CNN, Newsday, and the U.S. State Department.

<https://www.hannahbae.com/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/hanbae>

Instagram: <https://twitter.com/hanbae>

James Han Mattson was born in Seoul, Korea, and raised in North Dakota. A graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, he has received grants from the Michener-Copernicus Society of America and Humanities, North Dakota. He has been a featured storyteller on The Moth, and has taught at the University of Iowa, the University of Cape Town, the University of Maryland, the George Washington University, Murray State University, and the University of California – Berkeley. In 2009, he moved to Korea and reunited with his birth family after 30 years of separation.

He is the author of two novels: *The Lost Prayers of Ricky Graves*, which was an Amazon Best Book of the Month, and a New York Post Required Reading and forthcoming this fall, *Reprieve*. He is currently the fiction editor of Hyphen Magazine.

<http://www.jameshanmattson.com>

Twitter: @jhmattson

Jennifer Chang is the author of *The History of Anonymity* and *Some Say the Lark*, which received the 2018 William Carlos Williams Award. She has new poems forthcoming in American Poetry Review, The Believer, Poetry Northwest, A Public Space, and Yale Review, and her essays on poetry and poetics have appeared in Blackwell's Companion to the Harlem Renaissance, Los Angeles Review of Books, New England Review, New Literary History, the Oxford Encyclopedia of Asian American Literature and Culture, and The Volta. She has taught creative writing and literature at George Washington University and the University of Houston, and this fall will begin teaching at the Michener Center for Writers and the New Writers Project at the University of Texas. She is the poetry editor of the New England Review.

Instagram: @twignoise

Hasanthika Sirisena is an associate editor at West Branch magazine and an editor at 7.13 Books. She is the author of the short story collection *The Other One* and the forthcoming essay collection *Dark Tourist*.

<https://www.hasanthikasirisena.com/>

Twitter: @thinkhasie

Instagram: @thinkhasie_writing

Jung Yun is the author of *O Beautiful*, which will be published this fall. Her first novel, *Shelter*, was long-listed for the Center for Fiction's First Novel Prize and a finalist for the Barnes and Noble Discover Great New Writers Award. Her work has appeared in Tin House, The Massachusetts Review, The Indiana Review, and The Atlantic, among others. She has received an honorable mention for the Pushcart Prize and residencies from the MacDowell Colony, Ucross Foundation, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and the National Humanities Center. Currently, she is an assistant professor of English at the George Washington University.

<http://www.jungyun.com>

Twitter: @JungYun71

Instagram: @JungYun71

CityLit is especially pleased to announce the local curators tapped for this special series, South Asian American **Aditya Desai**, fiction writer, essayist, who also serves as a CityLit Board Member and Secretary; and Korean American **Jung Yun**, author of the novels "Shelter" and the forthcoming "O Beautiful".



DON'T MISS:

CityLit presents a special, month-long spotlight on Baltimore AAPI writers



THE INVISIBLE INVINCIBLE ASIAN AMERICAN

telling our stories



Hosted by:
Aditya Desai

Listen to pre-recorded interviews with featured local literary talent Ryan Artes, Rajani Gudlavalleti, Nancy Nguyen, Nguyen Khoi Nguyen, Sunmi, Lyra Yang, and Saima Sitwat In conversation with CityLit, featuring Aditya Desai.



Ryan Artes

**Baltimore
AAPI
Writer's
Spotlight!**



Nancy Nguyen

Interviews will be promoted through [CityLit's YouTube](#) and social media channels.

Each interview includes a short reading, followed by a conversation about the selection, writing life, and how one negotiates their Asian American identity on the page.

CityLit encourages the continued support of these local literary artists.



Rajani
Gudlavalleti

**Video Interviews
@CityLitProject
YouTube
Facebook
Twitter
Instagram**



Nguyễn Khôi
Nguyễn



Saima Sitwat



Sunmi



Lyra Yang

CHECK OUT THE INTERVIEWS ON CITYLIT'S [YOUTUBE CHANNEL](#).

Ryan Artes is an emerging writer and visual artist from Baltimore, MD. He creates from the perspective of his queer, brown, and adopted identity. These aspects of his identity inform his work directly and indirectly. He has created privately for years, and wants to share his work publicly. His self-published poetry chapbook, *After Midnight*, is currently available.

Instagram: @jafarmageddon

Rajani Gudlavalleti is a dark-skinned, second-generation, Asian South Indian, Dominant-Caste Hindu-raised atheist, queer woman living in Baltimore, MD. Her work focuses on advancing social justice at the intersections of public health and the legal system. She serves on the executive team of Baltimore Harm Reduction Coalition as director of the mobilization, advocating to end the drug war and anti-sex work policies. Rajani is also a consultant with Baltimore Racial Justice Action and co-organizer with Baltimore Asian Resistance in Solidarity. In Fall 2018, Rajani was a Gardarev Center Fellow, working on her book of essays and poetry exploring identity through personal stories and intersectional social analysis.

www.rajani.gudlavalleti.com

Twitter: @ruhjuhnee

Instagram: @ruhjuhnee

Saima Adil Sitwat is a writer and educator. She emigrated from Pakistan to the United States in 2003 and is the author of the memoir *American Muslim: An Immigrant's Journey*. She writes about cultural assimilation and facilitates conversations on race, religion, and identity politics, currently from her new residence in Baltimore, Md.

<https://saimasitwat.com>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/SaimaSitwat>

Instagram: @saimasitwat_author

Originally from Orange County, **Nancy Nguyen** now resides in Baltimore, where she writes and teaches. She was a 2019 Aspen Words Emerging Writer Fellow, and she received scholarships and support from the Kweli International Literary Festival and Sewanee Writers' Conference. Her work has appeared in *Pigeonholes*, the *Jellyfish Review*, and *Brevity's* Nonfiction Blog. Nancy is at work on a collection.

Twitter: @thatnancynguyen

Instagram: @thenancynguyen

Nguyễn Khôi Nguyễn is a multi-disciplinary artist and educator. He is the author of the multimedia comic, The Gulf. He is the vocalist, pianist, composer, and bandleader of the jazz trio: Superior Cling. Nguyen is currently a digital media lecturer at Loyola University Maryland. He lives in Baltimore, Maryland with his wife and terrier.

<http://ngknguyen.com>

Twitter: @ngknguyen

Instagram: @thegulfcomic

Lyra Yang is a Baltimore-based writer. Lyra is a recipient of the Judith Royer Excellence in Playwriting Award. She is a current playwright fellow at Horticultural Playwrights Workshop. She has received commissions from Adventure Theatre MTC and Nothing without a Company. She has had work developed and presented with the Kennedy Center, Cherry Lane Theatre, Miranda Theatre, Round House Theatre, Spooky Action Theatre, Avant Bard Theatre, Chicago Dramatist, and more.

<http://lyranalan.com>

Twitter: @LyraSchonebaum

Instagram: @LyraSchoen

Sunmi is a cartoonist whose work explores themes of emotional distance and fantastical femininity, within a framework of queer and Korean diasporic identity, mythology, and history. Their debut Young Adult graphic novel Firebird, which follows these threads, will be published with HarperCollins in 2023.

<https://sunmiflowers.com/>

Twitter: @sunmiflowers

Instagram: @sunmiflowers

Aditya Desai is a South Asian American writer and teacher living in Baltimore. He has served as the administrative coordinator for Baltimore Asian Resistance in Solidarity and member of the South Asian Rapid Response Initiative with Justice for Muslims Collective, and worked with several organizations in the city that use art towards racial justice including the CityLit Project, Baltimore Youth Arts, and the Asian Pasifika Arts Collective. His stories and essays in literary publications and magazines including Tropics of Meta, Barrelhouse Magazine, The Rumpus, The Millions, and others. He is also co-host and producer of the podcast Diasporastan.

<http://adityadesaiwriter.com>

Twitter: @atwittya

A BIG THANK YOU

From CityLit Project Executive Director, Carla Du Pree

CityLit recognizes the breadth and diversity of ethnicities and races of Asian Americans. This series is evidence of one way we hope literature creates an opportunity for tolerance and an invitation to embrace humanity in all people.

CityLit Project nurtures the culture of literature, creates enthusiasm for the literary arts, connects a community of avid readers and writers, and designs opportunities for diverse audiences to embrace the literary arts. CityLit is noted for its three signature events, the award-winning CityLit Festival each spring, the CityLit Stage at the Baltimore Book Festival in the fall, and the CityLit Studio: *Writers on Craft, Creativity & Community*.

Be sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) (our handle is @CityLitProject) and subscribe to our [YouTube channel](#) to be the first to know when new videos are released,

Stay informed! Sign up for our mailing list to stay up to date about CityLit news and events.

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

The event bookseller is [Greedy Reads](#). While the series is FREE, donations are widely accepted to foster more events like this.

[**greedy reads**](#)



Contribute to CityLit!

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

[DONATE NOW](#)



CITYLIT
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PLEASE COMPLETE OUR EVALUATION FORM

Many have no idea how critical it is for small nonprofits like ours 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>

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