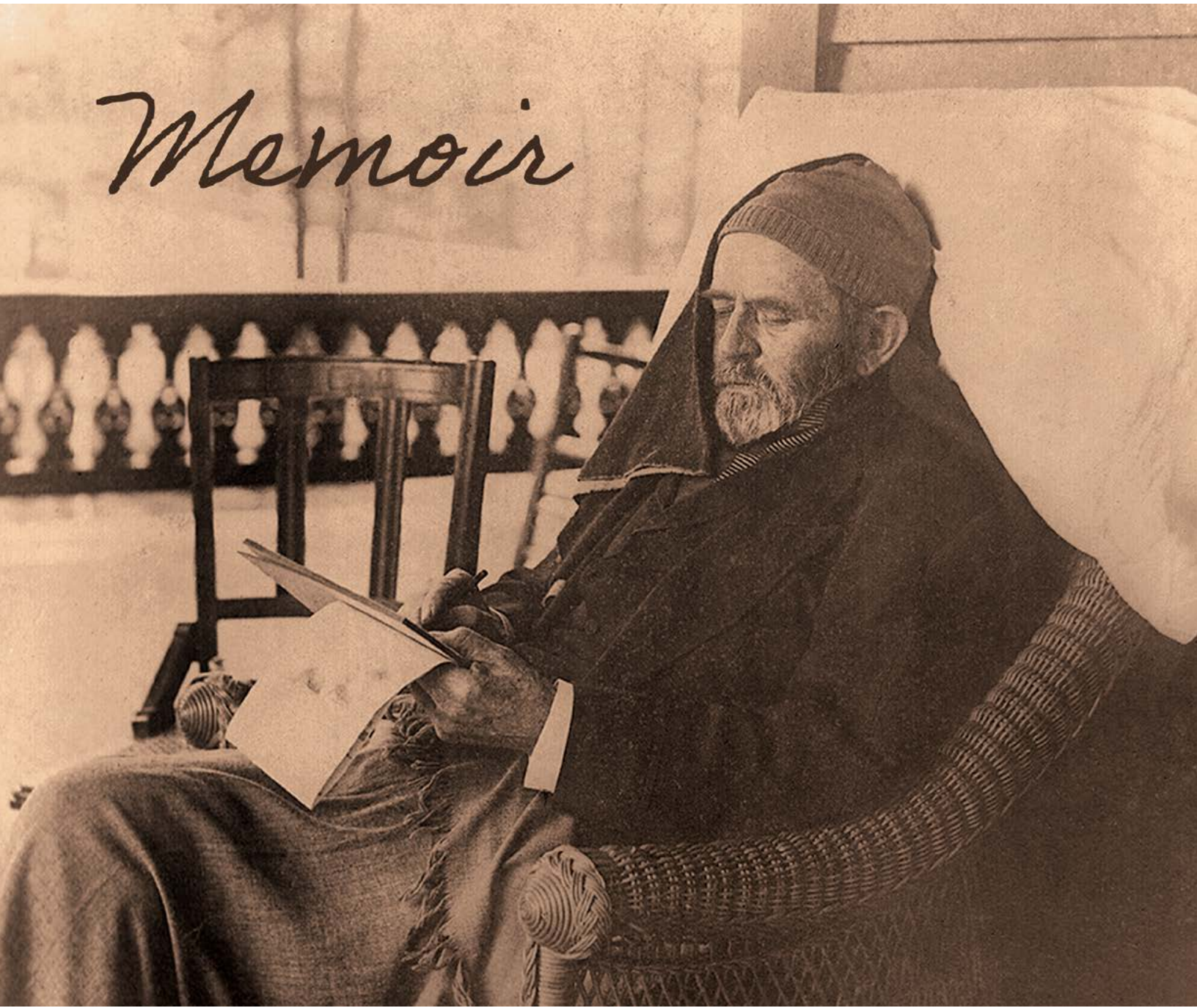


OHIO *ana* QUARTERLY

WINTER 2022 | VOL. 65 NO. 1

Memoir



Collecting, Preserving, and Celebrating Ohio Literature

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OHIOana QUARTERLY

WINTER 2022

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The *Ohioana Quarterly* (ISSN 0030-1248) is currently published four times a year by the Ohioana Library Association, 274 East First Avenue, Suite 300, Columbus, Ohio 43201. Individual subscriptions to the *Ohioana Quarterly* are available through membership in the Association; \$35 of membership dues pays the required subscription. Single copy \$6.50. U.S. postage paid at Columbus, Ohio. Send address changes to Ohioana Quarterly, 274 E. First Ave., Suite 300, Columbus, Ohio, 43201. Copyright © 2022 by the Ohioana Library Association. All rights reserved. Printed by PXPOHIO.

From the Director

Dear Friends,



“How I Spent My Summer Vacation.”

Do you remember writing a paper on that subject for English class at the start of a new school year? I do. I even remember some of the ones I wrote. For example, 1968: the summer I got my driver’s license. My folks took us to Nashville for our traditional July road trip, the highlight of which was attending a live show at the Grand Ole Opry where I heard Little Jimmy Dickens sing his immortal hit, “May the Bird of Paradise Fly Up Your Nose.”

I didn’t know at the time, but those school essays I wrote were memoirs . . . which I’m pleased to say is the special theme of this *Ohioana Quarterly*. Memoirs tell a story from someone’s life, and as contributing writer Jen Harper noted in a piece for *B&N Reads*, sometimes these stories can be “hilarious, heartbreaking, horrifying, or a combination of all three.”

We begin our exploration with seven award-winning Ohio authors who discuss the whys and hows of their own bestselling memoirs. We then go back to 1885 for a look at one of America’s greatest memoirists, Ohio general and president Ulysses S. Grant, whose bicentennial will be celebrated in 2022. A frank conversation follows with Brian Broome, whose debut memoir, *Punch Me Up to the Gods*, not only made many of 2021’s “best of the year” book lists, but also won the prestigious Kirkus Prize.

Speaking of 2022, this winter issue of the *Ohioana Quarterly* marks the beginning of its 65th year of publication. As you can imagine, it’s a milestone we’re quite proud of, and we’ll be doing a retrospective later this summer. The look and format may have changed over the years, but the purpose of the *Quarterly* remains the same: to promote and celebrate Ohio authors and books. We couldn’t have done it without you. *Thank you.*

Happy reading!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Weaver', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Weaver
Executive Director

ON THE COVER

Ulysses S. Grant on June 27, 1885, writing his *Personal Memoirs* on the porch of his summer home in Mount McGregor, New York. He finished five days before his death.

Photograph: <https://www.loc.gov/item/96522250/>.

Memory and Truth: The Art of Memoir

by David Weaver

Memoir. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines it as “a narrative composed from personal experience.” Memoir has long been one of the most popular literary genres. We’ve seen this firsthand at the Ohioana Library: panels on memoir at our annual Ohioana Book Festival always draw large crowds. Additionally, many memoirs have either won, or been finalists for, the annual Ohioana Book Awards.

The *Ohioana Quarterly* recently talked to seven authors of memoir with Ohio connections. Several are well-known; others are relatively new to the scene. We asked each of them to share their behind-the-memoir story. Bios of each author can be found at the end of the article.

Q: What motivated you to tell your story?

Maggie Downs, *Braver Than You Think: Around the World on the Trip of My (Mother’s) Lifetime*

I’ve always found inspiration in that Toni Morrison quote, “If there’s a book that you want to read, but it hasn’t been written yet, then you must write it.” That’s what motivated me. I was very young when my mom was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer’s, and I felt very isolated in that experience. Dementia is grim, and losing a parent is also traumatic, and both of those together left me with this big emptiness. I was looking for someone to tell me that the world still held beauty and magic and awe, that there was a reason to keep moving forward, that I could endure hard things. When I couldn’t find that story, I realized I had to write it. My hope is that my life experience offers connection to someone when they need it most, like a hand to help them through the dark.

David Giffels, *Furnishing Eternity*

With *Furnishing Eternity*, I was motivated by the fact that my father was nearing his eighties and I was looking for a woodworking project that would give me an excuse to spend time with him in his workshop, which had always been my favorite way to be in his presence. The fact that the project was building a coffin, as odd and morbid as that may seem, was really beside the point. I knew pretty early on that I would want to write about this, and once we got moving and unexpected life events began happening simultaneously, I knew it was a story. My dad is a great character, and I felt like he hadn’t been given his due in my earlier books.

Eliese Colette Goldbach, *Rust: A Memoir of Steel and Grit*

My memoir, *Rust*, chronicles the time I spent as a steelworker in Cleveland’s industrial valley, and my first inspiration for the story came from the physical landscape of the mill. The place was absolutely unworldly. Flames shot out from the top of smokestacks. Little flecks of graphite peppered the ground. Cranes shrieked and squealed as they rolled overhead, and most of the machinery could rip your body apart in seconds. I had seen pictures of steel mills before, but pictures didn’t do justice to the actual experience of looking up at a blast furnace in the middle of the night. The sight of the mill was ugly and terrifying but also strangely beautiful, and I knew that I wanted to capture that complexity on the page.

At the end of the day, though, it was more than just the scenery that prompted me to write. From my first few days at the steel mill, I felt an immediate sense of camaraderie with my fellow employees. These steelworkers were a family, and they welcomed me with open arms. We ate meals together. We celebrated

holidays together. We did crossword puzzles on our breaks, and we protected each other from the constant dangers of the mill. I wanted to explore those relationships in my writing. I wanted to understand how being a steelworker had enriched my life, and I wanted to give readers a nuanced view of the people I labored beside every day.

Stephen Kuusisto, *Have Dog, Will Travel: A Poet's Journey*

I was approached by Simon & Schuster about the prospect of writing a book on the topic of guide dogs—their training, history, and stories about their impacts on the lives of the blind. As I worked on the book, I saw it was a more personal story for me and I turned it into a true memoir.

Thrity Umrigar, *First Darling of the Morning: Selected Memories of an Indian Childhood*

I was thinking back on my life and all the things that went into my becoming a writer. I thought it would be interesting to explore that journey. The full title of my memoir is, *First Darling of the Morning: Selected Memories of an Indian Childhood*.

I added the subtitle because I wanted to make it clear to readers that no memoir can capture all the details and twists and turns of a life. Memory when transcribed onto a page is, by definition, selective, because you are making artistic and narrative choices all along. And so, I wrote this book with that narrative thread in mind—that I was going to try and analyze all the influences and events, happy and unhappy, that resulted in my becoming a writer.

Jeannie Vanasco, *Things We Didn't Talk About When I Was a Girl*

I'm interested in the artistic possibilities of what seems unsayable, and for a long time I couldn't speak about mental illness or sexual assault. If I don't have the language for something, I feel inspired to explore why.

Elissa Washuta, *White Magic*

I tried to write a novel before working on *White Magic*, but I just don't get excited by the idea of assembling the kind of plot points necessary to make fiction move. I'm much more interested in working through my questions

by moving along the lines of my thinking and pulling in what interests me (like video games and horoscopes and old books) to propel me toward the end. *White Magic* eventually became a quest to figure out why I had so much trouble in love, a real problem with real stakes for me.

Q: How long did you think about writing before you actually started to work?

Downs: At the beginning, I didn't think about it. It's more accurate to say the book forced me to write it. I was working toward my M.F.A. and intended to write a collection of speculative short stories about ghosts on an airplane. What I began writing instead was my memoir—which I suppose is also a story about being haunted—and that became my thesis project and the focus of my work. So, trust me—I had all these other ideas I wanted to explore, but this story wouldn't let me go until I completed it.

The problem was that I started writing less than one year after my mother's death, when my grief was still this raw, open wound, and I needed more time and distance. In light of that, I did let the story marinate quite a bit—several years, in fact. But, I was also working that whole time, and I wrote many dramatically different versions of the story until I landed on the structure that worked and became the book that is now on shelves. I think I needed to write what the book *wasn't* before I could figure out what it was.

Giffels: At some level, I knew from the time we began sketching coffin plans that I would write something about this. As a book project, it was a somewhat different experience than my previous memoir, *All the Way Home*, in that I was actively researching, note-taking, and writing as the experience was unfolding. *All the Way Home* was written a decade after the events. *Furnishing Eternity* was written alongside the actual experience.

Goldbach: Whenever I try to hang a picture, I inevitably begin with my hammer. I get a general idea of where the frame should sit, and then I pound a nail into a stud. If it's not right, I don't get frustrated. I just keep making holes until I'm satisfied. My husband is obviously perturbed by my lack of planning, but I can't seem to do it any other way. I'm not the type of person who double checks her measurements. I don't spend a lot of time in preparation.

It's the same way with my writing. Once I decided to tell my story, I began exploring the material in various forms and iterations. I tried writing *Rust* as an essay. I tried writing it as a book of prose poems. I pasted pieces of the narrative into a notebook in the hopes of emulating Anne Carson's *Nox*, and I penned a particularly awful version that was an homage to *McCain's Promise* by David Foster Wallace.

These misadventures produced countless pages of writing that will never see the light of day, but I also discovered something important about the story with each failed attempt. My greatest breakthroughs are always made in the process of putting words on a page, so that's precisely what I do. I hammer out a few disasters until I land on something that sticks.

Kuusisto: In truth, because the book was the idea of a wonderful editor at Simon & Schuster, my thinking was motivated by the actual writing of the book. I hadn't conceived of doing the book before I was approached.

Umrigar: I thought about the subject of my memoir off and on for quite some time. I can't recall the exact moment when I decided it was time to sit down and write, though. Writing a memoir in your early forties is quite an exercise in arrogance because you have to believe that your life story is of any interest or relevance to anyone else. That there is something worthwhile for you to contribute to the conversation. For me, that was the hardest hump to get over—to believe that there was value to my story.

Vanasco: As soon as I started thinking about the possibility of *Things We Didn't Talk About When I Was a Girl*, I started working on it. I wrote it in eight months, which surprised me. My first book, *The Glass Eye*, took more than a decade to write.

Washuta: The writing began quite a while ago, around 2011, and the initial work hardly resembles the writing that turned into *White Magic*. I didn't enter the process with a thought-out plan—I have to begin with a little idea and follow it somewhere. I was following for a long time before I began writing about magic, and then about heartbreak. By then, the thinking and the writing were wrapped around each other.

Q: Was it difficult speaking honestly about things that happened in your life?

Downs: Before I wrote this memoir, my career was in journalism, and for many of those years I wrote a column that drew upon my personal life. So, by the time I sat down with my manuscript, I was well-acquainted with the act of revealing myself to others. That said, my memoir is the most honest, vulnerable thing I've ever written. Every day with my manuscript felt like an act of interrogation, which is not necessarily a bad thing—I think self-reflection is great. But it can be challenging. I had to stop self-editing and stop judging myself, and only then could I be naked on the page.

Giffels: Yes, in a number of ways. *Furnishing Eternity* was intended in part to explore my notions of mortality as I neared age fifty. In that sense, I was “playing writer,” tackling one of the Big Themes. The writing gods must have taken note because during the course of this story, both my mother and my best friend died, forcing me to address death, loss, and grief in ways I never could have conceived. Grief is chaos and trying to make order of it in a narrative was probably the hardest thing I've ever done as a writer.

Goldbach: Absolutely. While *Rust* is primarily about my experiences as a steelworker, the book also chronicles my struggle with bipolar disorder. The illness has impacted my life greatly over the years, and I couldn't imagine telling my story without bringing mental health into the picture. My decision to include this element presented a challenge, however. There are moments when my bipolar disorder turns me into a person I don't recognize, and it can be difficult to reflect on those moments honestly. The task requires a type of self-reflection that isn't for the faint of heart: you must cultivate a willingness to appear less-than-perfect on the page; analyze your thoughts and motivations with a critical eye; acknowledge the ambiguities of a given situation; and be willing to unearth your own shortcomings and imperfections.

Memoir demands this type of honesty from all of us, whether we experience mental illness or not. In many ways, the genre turns us into more than just writers. We probe our thoughts and intentions with the discerning eye of a psychologist. We dig up the skeletons of the past with an archeologist's precision, and we divine the

truth of our stories with the keen intuitions of a fortune teller. The process is never easy, but I've found that the level of introspection required by the genre can have far-reaching effects. Honest self-reflection not only improves the quality of my writing; it also prompts me to be more mindful and compassionate in my daily life.

Kuusisto: Yes. I experienced many types of abuse as a blind child and writing about this was not easy. In general, memoirs written by people who come from historically marginalized backgrounds tend to involve some tough revelations. This is why I believe memoir is such an important part of the literary scene today.

Umrigar: It wasn't hard to describe the general culture I grew up in or the pranks we used to play on teachers, etc. But writing about personal details was difficult. I really had to convince myself that writing about the difficulties of my childhood would be useful to someone reading the book. And judging from the letters I get from readers, I think that was true. I now believe that no life, no experience, is singular.

Vanasco: With my second memoir, I thought about potential readers way more than I thought about them while writing my first memoir. That made the writing process very difficult. I knew that not everybody would like that I had interviewed the man who sexually assaulted me, and I could understand why. I mean, I still don't like that I felt the need to reach out to him. I'm embarrassed that I treated him as a reliable source, fact-checking my memory of the assault against his memory. But my goal as a memoirist is to help readers come away with nuanced understandings of human behavior—which is why my internal conflict seemed worth pursuing. I also think it contributed to the emotional and intellectual arcs.

Washuta: It is hard for me to *speak* about these things, but not to write about them. I suppose it is "hard" in that it is hard on me, but I don't find it challenging to get words on the page. I (usually) make writing a very safe, gated, locked-down place where I can make whatever I want without having to think about showing anybody my drafts before I'm ready. There's no real feeling of disclosure because I'm not telling anyone anything they don't know—it's all for me. Until, of course, it's not.

Q: What was the hardest part of the story to tell?

Downs: Steve Almond has this great piece of writing advice, "Slow down where it hurts." (Which is also great life advice, too.) I wrote that quote on a sticky note and kept it on my laptop to remind myself to slow down in the painful parts. Of course, the instinct is to rush through pain. Nobody wants to hurt, and nobody wants to steep in the worst moments of their life. But it was only when I forced myself to slow down that I found the deeper facets of the story I wanted to tell. That said, there were definitely days in the writing process where I spent hours mentally revisiting something tragic, like my mom's funeral. It was hard for me to leave that work on my computer and not let it affect everything else in my life.

Goldbach: In one section of *Rust*, I grapple with the memory of a sexual assault that I experienced in college. These passages were the most difficult to capture on the page. For me, writing is always a tough and tiring task. It's never easy to turn a blank screen into a story, but the process becomes even more challenging when exploring past trauma. Every time I dredge up those kinds of memories, I reawaken the emotions that were experienced in the aftermath. Then I still have to do the hard work of writing—of crafting detailed descriptions, creating realistic dialogue, and stringing together sentences that are vivid and powerful. These tasks consume a great deal of mental energy even when I'm *not* writing about trauma, so the heightened emotions that I experience while describing painful memories can leave me feeling even more tense, anxious, and exhausted.

It took me a long time to finish those sections about sexual assault. There were days when I could barely write anything. There were days when I only produced a paragraph or two. It felt like my progress was stalled on the page, but I just kept writing a little at a time. I also focused on self-care and self-compassion. I prioritized activities that could keep me mentally and physically well. I didn't criticize myself on the days when I only composed a few sentences, and I never stopped hoping that my story would help other people feel less alone.

To all my fellow memoirists out there: Please be kind to yourself in the writing process. This is exceptionally difficult work, and you deserve a lot of credit for doing it.

Kuusisto: I wrote about my alcoholic mother, who was often violent.

Umrigar: Writing about my difficult relationship with my mom and my family dynamics was hard and painful for me. To be honest to your craft, you have to make yourself feel those feelings you'd felt at seven and twelve and fourteen—feelings you thought you'd never have to experience again.

Vanasco: Transcribing my conversations with Mark was probably the hardest part of writing *Things We Didn't Talk About When I Was a Girl*. I could hear myself being overly accommodating. I'd like to say I was manipulating him, putting him at ease so that he would give me honest answers, yet I slipped so easily into comforting him because his discomfort made me so uncomfortable. But I think that discomfort benefited the book's structure. It gave me the idea to break apart the transcribed conversations with scenes and reflection.

The hardest part of writing my first book was figuring out the plot. I didn't yet understand that my deathbed promise to my dad—the promise that I would write a book for him—could serve as the plot.

Washuta: Well, as I said above, it *is* hard for me to have conversations about these things, so I won't rehash the hardest events of the book here. But I will say that in early 2018, I began to realize I needed to write about a relationship that had been abusive, and so I had to give myself permission to see it for what it was. It had happened a long time before, and I'd written about it a little, but I didn't go as deeply as I would eventually have to—in drafting, and even more so in revision, when I had to press as deeply as possible into the memories to find what I wasn't immediately understanding.

Q: How does writing memoir compare to writing in other genres?

Downs: I do write some fiction, but I find it daunting. There are so many options for what can happen in a story, I get overwhelmed. It's like when I start shopping for something simple like a toaster, and suddenly I've read two hundred reviews of toasters and have twenty-seven tabs about toasters open on my computer; I end up so overloaded by choice, I shut down completely and never end up buying the toaster. That's what it feels like

for me to write fiction, except the tabs that are open are in my brain. It's hard for me to tell a story where literally anything can happen.

Memoir, on the other hand, offers constraints, and I think that's thrilling. That's where the craft of this genre comes in. I can play with time, structure, style, and voice, but ultimately, I'm returning to one story that needs to be told.

Giffels: There's a limit to the topics. A good memoir tells the story of one segment of the narrator's personal life. Most of us only have one or two experiences that are worthy of a book-length narrative. I've written two memoirs, one about trying to establish my family in a condemned mansion, and one about building a coffin with my dad. Another of my books, *The Hard Way on Purpose*, started out as a memoir, but I realized I wasn't an interesting enough character to sustain it, and so it ended up as a collection of essays. So, I think I've used up all my memoir material until some interesting new thing happens to me.

Goldbach: Whenever I start a new memoir, it feels like someone has dumped a heaping pile of puzzle pieces on my desk. Some of these pieces are shiny, colorful, and pristine. Others are a bit mangled or warped. Somewhere within this pile, there are a handful of pieces that belong together. All of the others must be brushed to the side. My first challenge as a memoirist is to figure out which pieces I need. My second challenge is to combine those pieces into a picture that is both beautiful and cohesive. How am I going to link that crisp piece with the frayed one? How will I decide which parts need to be thrown away? The poet and fiction writer can always create new pieces when the need arises, but the memoirist doesn't have this luxury. You have to work with what you've got. You're restricted to the facts. This isn't meant to downplay the difficult work that poets and fiction writers do, of course. Dreaming up plots, images, and characters is just as arduous as creating something with a finite number of pieces. But the memoirist's task is very different from that of other writers. Your creative energy is spent breathing life into a messy pile of memories that must be reawakened, reevaluated, and rearranged into a seamless whole.

Kuusisto: For me, as a poet, the emotional candor required is consistent across forms. Creative nonfiction

does require a fidelity to truth as I see it, so there's more room to play with the imagination when I'm writing poetry.

Umrigar: I find that writing creative memoir borrows the techniques of fiction—a narrative thread, memorable characters, reliance on dialogue, etc. The big difference is that what you document in memoir is all true and has actually happened. Fiction relies on imagination—the writer makes up magical and wondrous experiences for their characters. Memoir depends on memory and truth. Writers who blur that line violate an implicit contract of trust they've made with the reader.

Vanasco: I think good writing is good writing. That said, for me, the most compelling element of memoir is the reflection, which constructs the plot, or the meaning of events. And reflection relies on point of view, which comes down to voice. I'll read a memoir about anything if it's voice driven. I also believe memoirists should represent the truth as accurately as possible, and when I say, "as accurately as possible," I mean that they're making good-faith attempts at getting it right.

Washuta: A lovely feature of memoir is that it can stretch toward the conventions of fiction—with plots, scenes, dialogue, and all that—or it can take on some of the conventions of poetry, or it can be its own genre apart, which is how I think of my practice of it. Fundamentally, I think the adherence to what happened and what it means makes for a different kind of work than fiction writing. (I don't know enough about poetry to speak to that.) Trying to find what's inside me and why it matters is different work than anything else I've done.

Q: Are there any particular memoirs or writers of memoir that you like and perhaps inspired you?

Downs: Memoir is my favorite genre, so I have huge stacks that rival the size of the Empire State Building. Some of my most beloved, dog-eared books are *Priestdaddy* by Patricia Lockwood, *Shutterbabe* by Deborah Copaken Kogan, *The Rules Do Not Apply* by Ariel Levy, *Welcome to the Goddamn Ice Cube* by Blair Braverman, and *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah. Also, I'll read anything written by Pico Iyer or Alex Marzano-Lesnevich.

Giffels: There are so many. Joan Didion's *The Year of Magical Thinking* was an important book for me as both a writer and a person grieving the loss of a loved one. Other memoirists I admire and learn from are Dave Eggers, Rick Bragg, and, of course, Mary Karr, who kind of set the contemporary standard with *The Liars' Club*.

Goldbach: I drew a lot of inspiration from *Educated* by Tara Westover and *Heartland* by Sarah Smarsh. Both of those memoirs were great examples of the type of story I wanted to tell, but I've also been affected by a host of other writers over the years. These include Mary Karr, Mary Roach, Joan Didion, Dave Eggers, Lidia Yuknavitch, Lucy Grealy, Leslie Jamison, and Eula Biss. Each author has taught me something important about writing, and I'm always eager to read new memoirs that can push the bounds of my creativity.

Kuusisto: It's a long list. I happen to think Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* is the greatest book of nonfiction in American literature. But then there's the elegance and bravery of Frederick Douglass; the truth to power of Audre Lorde; the resilience and joy of Dorothy Allison; Charles Blow's *Fire Shut Up in My Bones*; and just about everything by James Baldwin.

Umrigar: Too many to mention. But Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes* was definitely an influence on me, as it was on a whole generation of writers. I had also read and loved Dave Egger's *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*. They are two very different books, but both have wildly beautiful and distinctive voices.

Vanasco: The meta-narrative running through Virginia Woolf's unfinished memoir, *A Sketch of the Past*, deeply influenced me when I was writing my first memoir. Annie Ernaux's body of work continues to inspire me. Also, Sarah Polley's documentary, *The Stories We Tell*.

Washuta: So many. I hesitate to give the fullest list possible because I'm not sure all the writers who influenced me would call themselves memoirists (even part-time), but I learned a lot from Susanna Kaysen, Janet Campbell Hale, Lauren Slater, Leslie Marmon Silko, Deborah Miranda, Kristin Hersh, Jesmyn Ward, Ernestine Hayes, Melissa Febos, Wendy C. Ortiz, Mattilda Bernstein Sycamore, and Joy Harjo.

Q: As someone who teaches creative writing, what do you tell your students about writing creative nonfiction like memoir?

Downs: I encourage everyone to write to all the senses, not just what can be seen or heard, but smells, tastes, and touch as well. When writing is particularly sensory, it feels like an old friend has embraced me and is pulling me along for a ride. And at that point, I don't even care what the story is—I'll happily go wherever they take me.

Giffels: I tell my students that as paradoxical as it may seem, the more intensely personal a story is, the more universal it becomes.

Goldbach: There are so many things to learn. Be dispassionate about your writing, and don't get too attached to the memories that you want to tell. Sometimes the moments that are important to us personally aren't always the moments that best serve a story.

As much as possible, try to see yourself as a character. The you who puts pen to paper is quite different from the you that appears on the page.

If you're having trouble capturing certain aspects of your experience, try writing them in the third person. This experiment can separate you from the material, allowing you to approach it with more objectivity.

Be honest. Truly honest. We are rarely faultless heroes who can do no wrong, but neither are we outright villains worthy of every reproach. All of us fall somewhere in between, and your goal as a memoirist is to honor the messy contradictions that make life beautiful.

Kuusisto: I remind them that you can't write about your life without loving who you used to be, even if your former life was filled with pain and hardship.

Umrigar: Surprisingly, I give the same advice to all my students, regardless of the genre. I always ask them what tools other professionals carry—carpenters carry a hammer, doctors carry a stethoscope, electricians carry wires and switches. But what's in a writer's toolbox? Oh sure, paper and pens and a laptop. But what writers *really* carry in their toolbox is integrity. Emotional honesty. The desire to tell the truest story they can. And

that truth should be organic, emerging slowly from the behavior of the characters.

Also, perhaps more than any other genre (save for poetry), voice and language matter a great deal in memoir. The writing should be as natural, elegant, and beautiful as possible. Like music, it should set a mood and a tone. I could read a memoir about someone staring at a blank wall for fifteen hours a day if the voice telling that story was irresistible. Just having a good story isn't enough to carry a memoir—the way it's told to us matters.

Vanasco: I tell students to treat the truth—or the truth as they remember it—as a formal constraint. And to say when they don't know or remember something. Lean into uncertainty. See where it takes you.

Washuta: I teach graduate and advanced undergraduate courses, and at those levels, we are deeply involved in the technical aspects of the personal essay. Those students are working on something beyond just telling their stories—they are crafting exquisite pieces hewn and smoothed with intended effects in mind, working within (and often against) systems of literary conventions. I tell them what I experience when I read their work, and I identify what's happening in the prose to create those effects. In the course of doing all this, I tell them a lot, so much I can't even think of the fundamentals right now! But one of the most important things I tell them is that they don't have to do it if it's not right for them, because for me, writing memoir tends to mean putting pain to work, and publishing memoir requires sacrifices one should think hard about—of privacy, of mystery, of the ability to let the past die.

Page 4 image: Grant, Ulysses S. Ulysses S. Grant Papers: Series 4, Personal Memoirs, -1885; 1885. 1885. Manuscript/Mixed Material. <https://www.loc.gov/item/mss233330012/>.

Meet the Authors

Maggie Downs is an author, journalist, and storytelling coach. *Braver Than You Think*, her debut memoir, was a 2021 Ohioana Book Award finalist. Her work has appeared in publications including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Palm Springs Life*, and *McSweeney's*. A native of Cincinnati, she now lives in Palm Springs, California.

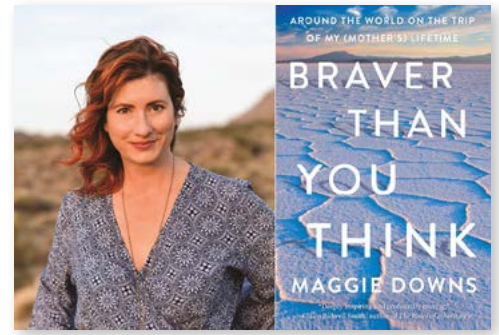


Photo by: Lance Gerber

David Giffels has written six books of nonfiction, including two Ohioana Book Award-winning memoirs, *All the Way Home* and *Furnishing Eternity*. A former *Akron Beacon-Journal* columnist, his writing has appeared in many publications. He also wrote for MTV's iconic series *Beavis and Butt-head*. A winner of the Cleveland Arts Prize, Giffels teaches creative nonfiction in the University of Akron's Northeast Ohio Master of Fine Arts program.

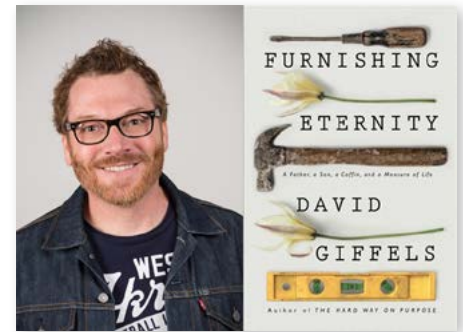


Photo by: David Giffels

Eliese Colette Goldbach is a former steelworker at the ArcelorMittal Cleveland Temper Mill. She received an M.F.A. in nonfiction from the Northeast Ohio Master of Fine Arts program. Her writing has appeared in many publications and won honors including the Ploughshares Emerging Writer's Award and the Ohioana Walter Rumsey Marvin Grant for emerging writers. Her acclaimed 2020 debut, *Rust: A Memoir of Grit and Steel*, was a 2021 Ohioana Book Award finalist.



Photo by: Eliese Colette Goldbach

Stephen Kuusisto is the author of three memoirs, including *Have Dog, Will Travel*, a 2019 Ohioana Book Award finalist, and three poetry collections. A graduate of the Iowa Writer's Workshop and a Fulbright Scholar, he has taught at the University of Iowa, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, and The Ohio State University. He currently teaches at Syracuse University where he holds a professorship in the Center on Human Policy, Law, and Disability Studies.

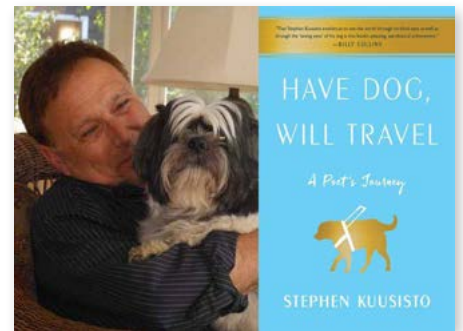


Photo by: Connie Kuusisto

Thrity Umrigar is the bestselling author of nine novels, including the newly-released *Honor*, and the memoir *First Darling of the Morning: Selected Memories of an Indian Childhood*. She is also the author of three children's picture books, including the 2021 Ohioana Book Award-winning *Sugar in Milk*. The winner of the Lambda Literary Award and the Cleveland Arts Prize, Umrigar is a Distinguished Professor of English at Case Western Reserve University.



Photo by: Robert Muller

Jeannie Vanasco is the author of two memoirs, *The Glass Eye* and *Things We Didn't Talk About When I Was a Girl*, which won the 2020 Ohioana Book Award in nonfiction. Previously, Vanasco won the Ohioana Walter Rumsey Marvin Grant for emerging writers. Her work has appeared in *The Believer*, *The New York Times*, *Modern Love*, *Tin House*, and elsewhere. A native of Sandusky, Ohio, she now lives in Baltimore and is an assistant professor at Towson University.



Photo by: Dennis Drenner

Elissa Washuta is a member of the Cowlitz Indian Tribe and a nonfiction writer. She is the author of the memoirs *White Magic*, *Starvation Mode*, and *My Body Is a Book of Rules*, named a finalist for the Washington State Book Award. With Theresa Warburton, she is co-editor of the anthology *Shapes of Native Nonfiction: Collected Essays by Contemporary Writers*. She is also an assistant professor of creative writing at The Ohio State University.



Photo by: KR Forbes

A General's Last Battle

This year (April 27) marks the bicentennial of Ulysses S. Grant. Celebrations will be held across the country, including Ohio—at his birthplace in Point Pleasant and his boyhood home in Georgetown, both sites managed by Ohio History Connection (and both sites on the Ohioana Library's Ohio Literary Trail).

Few Ohioans hold a place in American history as high as Ulysses S. Grant. As commanding general, he led the Union Army to victory in the Civil War. As eighteenth president of the United States, he championed civil rights and signed the law creating the first national park in the world—Yellowstone. He was a genuine American hero, but few people know that Grant was also a great writer. In fact, he penned what is considered one of the best, if not *the* best, memoir written by an American President.

After his two terms in the White House ended in 1877, Grant and his wife Julia embarked on a triumphal world tour that lasted two years. Returning to America, Grant settled in New York City and, at the suggestion of his son Buck, went into the investment and banking business with one of Buck's college classmates, Ferdinand Ward. While the firm of Grant & Ward prospered for several years, Ward proved to be unscrupulous. His fraudulent schemes ultimately landed him in jail, and ruined Grant financially.

In the fall of 1884, Grant was diagnosed with terminal throat cancer. He agonized over how he would be able to provide for Julia.

Grant had resisted prior offers to write his memoir. He didn't need the money, he had said, and he "was not a literary person." But now—sick, broke, and living on the generosity of others—he changed his mind. Fortunately, one of his close friends and admirers was the most renowned author of the day: Mark Twain. Twain arranged to publish Grant's memoirs in an extraordinary deal that would not only advance him \$50,000, but also give Julia seventy percent of the royalties.

The press and public were aware of Grant's condition and knew of his work on the book. His struggle to finish his memoir before he died—which many admirably called "his greatest battle"—attracted wide attention. Summer in New York City was brutal, and as Grant's

cancer progressed, his pain and discomfort increased. It was decided to move him to Mount McGregor in upstate New York. There, Grant continued working at a feverish pace, writing twenty to thirty pages a day. He finished on July 18, 1885. Five days later, he died at age sixty-three—a victor to the end.

Once released, Grant's *Personal Memoirs* became a publishing phenomenon. Sales of the book generated royalties of \$450,000 for Julia (equal to more than \$13 million today). The critical response was equally enthusiastic. Grant's prose was praised for its simplicity, clarity, honesty, and candor. More than a century later, it is still highly regarded today.

According to one of Grant's recent biographers, H. W. Brands, no one would be more surprised by the book's enduring impact than Grant himself, noting that "he was a very modest man," despite his remarkable career and achievements as a military leader and two-term president. Brands said, "I think it would've astonished Grant that, in addition to this, he was considered one of the greatest writers in American history."



Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, by Constant Mayer (1866). Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., courtesy Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, VA.

A Conversation with Brian Broome

by Courtney Brown

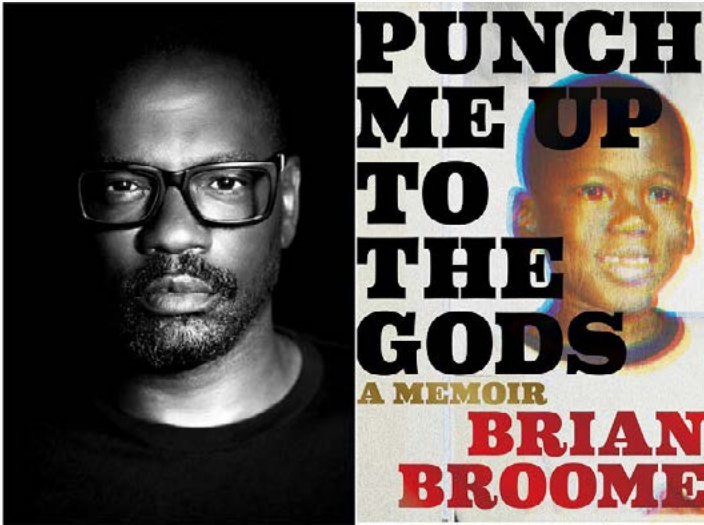


Photo by: Andy Johanson

Punch Me Up to the Gods introduces a powerful new talent in Brian Broome, who spent his early years growing up in Ohio hiding crushes on other boys. This unforgettable debut recounts his experiences—the hilarious, the cringe-worthy, and the achingly real—to reveal an outsider fumbling to find his way in. Gwendolyn Brooks’ poem “We Real Cool” frames the story. Broome’s poignant, beautiful writing brings a fresh voice to ongoing cultural conversations about Blackness and Queerness in America.

Q A lot of people think memoirs are written at the end of someone’s life, looking back on their memories. What inspired you to write your story at a relatively young age?

A Well, first of all, thank you for calling me “relatively young.” I’m fifty-one, and I’m at that age where I’m not so sure anymore how young I feel. In a way, I did write *Punch Me Up to the Gods* at the end of my life. The end of a certain part of my life, I mean, and the beginning of another. I don’t know how conscious I was of it at the time of writing, but I wanted to end the part of my life where my existence was completely dependent upon what other people thought or said about me. I wanted to end the life of active addiction and depression. And I

wanted to end the part where I was just rudderless and coasting. So, in a way, I did write this book at the end of my life. We all go through periods that have to end. We do it all the time. It’s often terrifying to try to begin a new one, but it can also be exhilarating. This is where I am now.

Q One thing that surprised me about your memoir was the focus on public transportation. Do you still ride the P1? Do you often create similar stories about other passengers that affect you, like that of Tuan?

A I still ride the P1. That bus always delivers in the story department. It connects such far-flung and different neighborhoods in the city of Pittsburgh. It connects people from all different races and classes, and you can overhear some great dialogue if you’re eavesdropping. I still ride it pretty much every day. The bus from *Punch Me Up to the Gods* is the 61C, which is not a bus that I ride very often. It was such a stroke of luck that I had to get on it the day that Tuan and his father were riding. Every time I board public transportation, my eyes and ears are peeled for a great story. Sometimes I ride the bus even when I don’t have to particularly go anywhere. I just ride and listen. And I do write down what I see and hear. It’s fun and it gives me a break from the mess going on in my own head. I look for the similarities and differences in the passengers’ stories. It’s kind of a strange way to have fun, but it keeps me out of trouble.

Q You are extremely honest in your writing—even when you are discussing the times when you lied about who you really were or what you were really doing. When you were starting to write, did you have any fears about telling your story truthfully? How did you overcome those? Do you feel vulnerable now that your words are out in the world?

A It’s embarrassing to have been such a liar. I was always really ashamed of who I was and where I came from. Now I have a better understanding of why I did it. I think I figured out early on in life that the world didn’t want me as I was, and I didn’t have

the intestinal fortitude to just be myself. I desperately wanted people to like me and would do or say anything to make that happen. Little did I know at the time that the people to whom I was lying probably didn't like me anyway. So, I was really doing it for myself. My life was ruled by shame. Now that the truth is out there, I don't necessarily feel vulnerable. There's a saying in rehab that you're only as sick as your secrets. Well, I wanted to get better. I wanted to feel what life was like on the other side of all of that shame—and now I do. It's not always a bed of roses. But it feels better to be a work-in-progress. And I have to learn to forgive myself a little bit for being so lost.

Q There is a lot to relate to in your book—many people feel like the world is trying to place them into a category or box they don't necessarily fit into, whether it's because of race, sexuality, class, addictions, or something else. Did you know or believe while you were writing your memoir that it would resonate with so many people?

A I remember being asked early on who I thought the book is for. This was while I was still writing it. My answer was that the book is for other Black gay boys. I genuinely wanted them to read this book as a set of cautionary tales that screamed, "Please don't be like me!" I thought that warning them was the last positive thing I could do with my life, since I had messed it up so badly. I have been greatly surprised by all the people who have written to me about how they were able to connect to the themes of my book. People from all different backgrounds have told me that they've been through experiences similar to what I went through. And I have felt less alone in the world as a result. I am finding out just now that there was nothing really wrong with me essentially, and that everyone has felt these kinds of pressures. James Baldwin wrote, "You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, who had ever been alive." Ironically, it was writing my own book that has made me realize this truth.

Q Your book features a lot of quotations and discussion of James Baldwin, and frequently refers to poetry by Gwendolyn Brooks. When did you first encounter those writers? Are there any other authors who inspired you to tell your story?

A I don't remember exactly when I found James Baldwin. But I know that I was just looking for someone who was like me. Black, male, and gay. I remember reading his work and being astounded by how different he was from me. He seemed fearless whereas I was full of fear. He seemed proud whereas I was full of shame. Later on, when I saw him interviewed on television, I was astounded by his poise, humor, and self-assuredness. I wondered how he'd gotten that way, and why I couldn't seem to muster what looked like fearlessness to me. Now, I think I know that he must have been fearful at times. But he pushed through the fear and this is something that I'm still learning to do. I encountered Gwendolyn Brooks only very recently. I was in the Chatham University library when I came across "We Real Cool." It's funny because I thought that I'd discovered it and wondered why no one was talking about her incredible poem. I have since been disabused of that thought. But when I read the poem, I felt like Brooks was talking to me and I knew that I wanted her poem in this book. When I think about writing, there isn't really any one writer who has inspired me. There is so much incredible writing out there. I admire the wordsmithing of Toni Morrison, while I stand in awe of Stephen King's prolific career. So many authors have inspired me to write, and I find that my inspiration usually comes from who I'm reading and enjoying at the time.

Q Do you have any writing advice for younger queer, Black kids growing up in Ohio? Is there anything you would say to your younger self if you could talk to him now?

A I would like to tell my younger self not to listen to all the people who told me who to be and how not to be. I would tell myself that, but I know that I wouldn't listen to myself. I'm fairly certain that, given the same circumstances, I would have made the same bad decisions. I was just trying to survive. But I'd give the same advice to queer, Black kids growing up in Ohio today. And I can only hope that they'd listen. I know when you're young, listening isn't really at the top of your to-do list. You're trying to navigate a whole world and figure out how, and if, you fit into it anywhere. I'd say to try to be yourself. Try to be kind—both to yourself and others. Don't listen to the people who are trying to turn you into something you're not and telling you that you're not enough the way you are. Breathe deeply and get through it. You're more special than you realize.

NONFICTION

Abdurraqib, Hanif. *A Little Devil in America: Notes in Praise of Black Performance*.

New York, NY: Random House, 2021.

“I say that I love my people and I mean there is a language that is only ours, and within that language there is shelter,” writes Hanif Abdurraqib in the essay “This One Goes Out to All the Magical Negroes” found in his most recent collection of essays, *A Little Devil in America: Notes in Praise of Black Performance*.

A Little Devil in America is both a tribute and an exploration into Black life, art, and performance by established cultural critic and Columbus native Hanif Abdurraqib. There’s no doubt why this collection was a 2021 National Book Award finalist, as each essay is written with love and respect to its subject and its reader, to whom sometimes Abdurraqib will affectionally address as “lover.”

From grief and the performance of Black funerals to what it takes to stay alive and continue to create, there are nuances that may never be understood by the masses. This collection of essays sheds light on areas of Black life and culture that have rarely been explored in the realm of creative nonfiction with both a critical lens and praise, providing language to readers who may have experienced or witnessed some of the cultural happenings explored in each essay, but may have not had the words to articulate it.

I heard Abdurraqib read the essay “It is Safe to Say I Have Lost Many Games of Spades” at the Columbus Metropolitan Library (Main Branch) in October. The essay is written in a way that players (winners or losers) of Spades can relate to, as well as people who have never played a game of Spades in their entire lives. Abdurraqib is well-versed in spinning criticism



into personal reflection and creating a true creative nonfiction essay. In this case, the essay pivots away from *how to play Spades* and *why* to what it means to play Spades with different people and in different places, becoming a meditation on kin and the definition of “home.” Just as he writes about the differences (and commonalities) between clocking into work himself and Beyoncé clocking into work, literal magic tricks and the fantasy of the “Magical Negro” in cinema, each essay explores mundanity or obscurity and spins it into gold, demonstrating the existence and multidimensionality of Black excellence across genres and generations.

“But when I speak that language into the world, I know how eager the world might be to bend it to its own desires,” Abdurraqib continues in the essay “This One Goes Out to All the Magical Negroes.” Each movement of the collection wrestles with an aspect of Blackness and its performance in majority-white spaces and majority-Black spaces—asking of the reader, when does life imitate art and vice versa? The answer, of course, is not for Abdurraqib to give, but for the reader to interpret based on his in-depth research and lyrical reference to some pivotal and some obscure moments and figures in Black history.

NEGESTI KAUDO TEACHES CREATIVE WRITING AT THE COLUMBUS COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN. THE 2015 WINNER OF OHIOANA’S WALTER RUMSEY MARVIN GRANT (AND YOUNGEST IN THE HISTORY OF THE PRIZE), HER DEBUT BOOK, *RIFE: ESSAYS*, WILL BE PUBLISHED IN MARCH BY MAD CREEK BOOKS, AN IMPRINT OF THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS.

Grace, Kevin. *Cincinnati’s Literary Heritage: A History for Booklovers*.

Mount Pleasant, SC: The History Press, 2021.

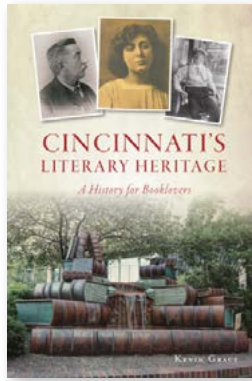
For those who love books and hold affection for the city of Cincinnati, this helpful and inspiring book is for you. A glance through it and you’ll soon be checking out websites and preparing for a literary road trip to Cincinnati for a serious—and fun—hit of bookishness via bookshops, libraries, bibliophile events, institutional programs, and more.

The author, Kevin Grace, is the head of the Archives and Rare Books Library at the University of Cincinnati, as

well as the University Archivist. He teaches in the University Honors Program on the global culture of books and reading.

Grace's fascination with the history of literature in Cincinnati began in 1972, when he was an undergraduate at UC and made an unexpected visit to "a legendary bookstore"—Acres of Books, which also was known as Bertram Smith's Acres of Books. He describes the beginnings of that well-known bookstore, writing that founder Bertram Smith, a very knowledgeable bookman, used to hang out in a certain Cincinnati saloon after his World War I military service. Perhaps to pay his bar bill, Bertram began selling used and rare books from his bar stool, saving and scrounging enough capital to open a store on Main Street in 1927. Eventually, he got the itch to travel and passed the bookstore to his wife so he could head west. He ultimately landed in Long Beach, California, where he opened another Acres of Books. The second store was open for seventy years and was known as the book purveyor to celebrities. Mrs. Smith later handed the original bar-born bookshop off to Bertram, Jr. After going through other hands, the store closed in 1991.

Going back to earlier history, Grace describes how Cincinnati's libraries were very important to the citizenry, nearly from the establishment of the city. The Mercantile Library was founded in 1835 and claims to be the oldest continuously operating library west of Philadelphia. The Ohio Mechanics Institute created a library which became an important cultural center for the town, and it is said that when Thomas Edison was living in Cincinnati, he read through every book there. In 1853, the first Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County was established. Cincinnati had nine Carnegie libraries built at the beginning of the twentieth century. Eight survive, with seven still serving as libraries. Of course, the various libraries at the University of Cincinnati add to the sense of a community devoted to a culture of reading and literature. Grace writes that, "The paragon of book architecture in Cincinnati is the Blegen Library," now a part of the University of Cincinnati library system.



Additionally, Cincinnati has had many literary societies, going back to 1829. Book collectors also abounded, such as William Procter of Procter and Gamble fame, who bought three famous private local libraries and donated them to the University of Cincinnati library. We read of a collector who amassed ten thousand volumes on the subject of masonry. Another anecdote tells the story of a devoted bibliophile who was book shopping in England, searching for rare volumes. He had a ticket to come back home, "However, he was visiting a bookstore and became so taken with the wonderful books that he missed his voyage." The ship he missed was the ill-fated *Titanic*.

The book spans other topics, too, including famous writers who lived in Cincinnati like Harriet Beecher Stowe, drama productions and Shakespeare clubs that have enlightened citizens since the frontier days, and modern literary favorites like Melanie Moore's Cincy Book Bus that roams the city. Grace concludes, "Today there is a vibrant writing community in Cincinnati that is matched with exceptional libraries and literacy programs, book arts, buildings, and some very fine bookstores selling both used and new volumes," though he admits that many local bookstores have disappeared over the past decade. He did recommend Duttonhofer's as one of those "very fine" bookstores.

I asked Grace what his personal "can't miss" spots are. He said, "I would say Carl Blegen Library on the University of Cincinnati campus with all its architectural details related to books and reading; the Cincinnati Type & Printing Museum, which is fairly new but is growing rapidly; the Lloyd Library and Museum; and the Harriet Beecher Stowe House."

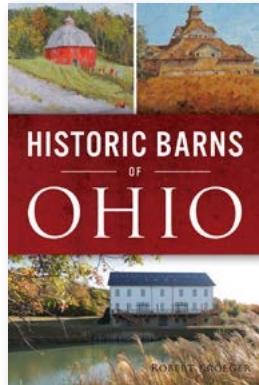
As with any publication of the History Press, the book has many photographs to accompany the text. My favorite is one of an early bookmobile sent out by the public library system.

Cincinnati's Literary Heritage: A History for Booklovers is highly recommended for armchair travel, or even better, a road trip to Cincinnati so you can experience firsthand the city's illustrious literary history.

GEORGE COWMEADOW BAUMAN IS THE FORMER OWNER OF THE ACORN BOOKSHOP IN COLUMBUS. HE'S A BOOK FREAK, A BOOKSTORE FREAK, A BASEBALL FREAK, A CAT FREAK, AND SHARES HIS LIFE WITH PROFESSOR LINDA, WHO APPRECIATES HER FREAKY HUSBAND.

Kroeger, Robert. *Historic Barns of Ohio.* Mount Pleasant, SC: The History Press, 2021.

While there are many pictorial surveys of vernacular barn architecture, almost all are comprised of photographs or graphic illustrations. Content in them is mostly technical, concerned with construction methods and materials. The recently published *Historic Barns of Ohio* is unique in that its images are all impressionistic oil paintings by the author himself, Robert Kroeger.



Dr. Kroeger, a retired dentist from Cincinnati, wanted to find, paint, and write about one historical barn from each of Ohio's eighty-eight counties. He embarked upon his mission in September, 2012, with a sense of urgency, commenting, "Barns represent the heart of America, and the old ones are bleeding. So many barns, so little time." He admits that when he first undertook his project to paint and write an essay on each barn, his writing ability surpassed his rudimentary painting skills. Undaunted, he began to study drawing, took online tutorials, and was mentored by the award-winning artist Nancy Achberger, eventually developing an impasto method of oil painting done with palette knives rather than brushes.

Kroeger's artistic rendering of his subjects communicates a sense of nostalgia or longing for an idealized past. These proud, hand-built structures once symbolized human ingenuity and agrarian progress. But in their state of dilapidation today, they symbolize a profound rift between humanity and the landscape . . . a rift that Kroeger restores with his palette knife. The artist paints barns in order to preserve them, imagining how they would have looked in their earlier days.

These vanishing relics of rural America are a favorite subject with many artists and people seem to have an unlimited appetite for pictures of them. Built with native hardwoods, sturdily constructed, and usually accompanied by a smokehouse, granary, corncrib, and wood-stave silo, the family farms of early settlers once fit harmoniously into the hills and plains of the pristine

Ohio landscape. They linger on not so much as romantic icons, but as melancholic reminders of a lost way of life.

The well-researched narratives that accompany each painting reveal the stalwart characters of Ohio's early barn builders, including folksy anecdotes recalled by the owners. The author eschews going into excessive detail about carpentry skills, stating, "I write about the history of the barn and its farm, about the family, the county, the region or, in some cases, about national pieces of early America if they are pertinent." The same images and text that are in the book can be viewed on the website <https://barnart.weebly.com>. A *Spectrum News 1* video of Kroeger discussing his Ohio historic barn project has also been posted on YouTube.

The book is available for purchase at many historical centers and museum gift shops in Ohio. Kroeger, however, generously donates his paintings, framed in old barn siding, to 4-H clubs and historical societies to be raffled by the organizations at fundraisers around the state.



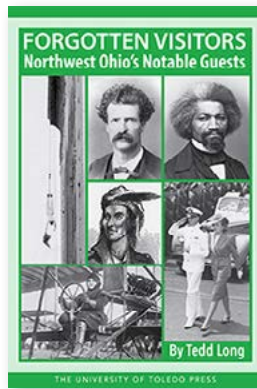
"George's Giant" from *Historic Barns of Ohio*. Painting by Robert Kroeger.

REVIEWED BY CARROLL MCCUNE, FREELANCE WRITER, HASKINS, OH

Long, Tedd. *Forgotten Visitors: Northwest Ohio's Notable Guests.*

Toledo, OH: University of Toledo Press, 2020.

Like listening to someone unknowingly speaking into a live microphone, Tedd Long's stories in *Forgotten Visitors: Northwest Ohio's Notable Guests* are interesting for what they reveal about the true character of their subjects, especially those who have been distorted by historians or mythologized in the popular press.



For instance, readers learn about a twenty-eight-year-old Lieutenant Robert E. Lee (of Civil War fame) who was sent to survey the disputed Michigan/Ohio border line in 1835. Lee sarcastically reported to the governor of the Michigan Territory that he had killed the lighthouse keeper on Canada's Point Pelee Island in Lake Erie, but apologized only for stealing some glass lampshades from the neglected lighthouse.

Readers also learn that Mark Twain turned down an invitation to write for the *Toledo Blade* in 1869 because he was jealous of its owner, David Ross Locke, who was a rival humorist writing under the pen name Petroleum V. Nasby. Harry Houdini was terrified by his own magic tricks. And Frederick Douglass, while speaking in Toledo, revealed his distrust of Abraham Lincoln for being "soft" on the South.

Local history may be Long's passion, but storytelling is his true calling. The author admits that he is bored by recitations of historical facts. As such, Long chose the characters in this book not for their historical importance (although all are famous), but for the drama, intrigue, humor, or improbability of a single event that took place in their lives while visiting Northwest Ohio. He confirms he was scrupulous about checking the sources of his stories that were mostly gleaned from old newspapers—fake news not being a recent phenomena—and the book is also indexed, including a bibliography at the end of each chapter. Long reports the backstories of these notable visitors to Northwest Ohio with the enthusiasm and urgency of a newsboy street hawker, quoting William Faulkner who wrote, "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

Nothing links the subjects of Long's stories together, which are as diverse as Sojourner Truth and Jumbo the Elephant. He writes about twenty-three forgotten visitors over a period of 210 years, beginning with the famous explorers Zebulon Pike and William Clark who were here with General Anthony Wayne in 1794. The book ends with Neil Young's unannounced appearance at a Pearl Jam rock concert at the Toledo Sports Arena on October 2, 2004. Any reader will certainly find someone of interest to them in this collection.

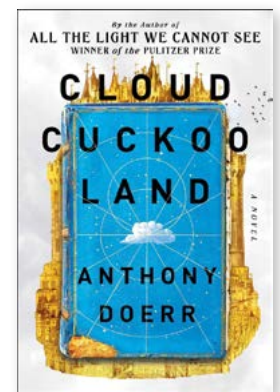
REVIEWED BY CARROLL MCCUNE, FREELANCE WRITER, HASKINS, OH

FICTION

Doerr, Anthony. *Cloud Cuckoo Land.*

New York, NY: Scribner, 2021.

Anthony Doerr's previous novel, *All the Light We Cannot See*, built a World War II plot that won him both fans and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. His new novel, *Cloud Cuckoo Land*, blazes a new trail, spanning three time periods and introducing five disconnected protagonists whose disparate threads eventually—and brilliantly—weave together.



We first meet Anna, a young orphan living in Constantinople around the 1450s. Anna and her sister, Maria, have been taken in by nuns and taught the fine art of embroidery. Unfortunately, Anna is not as skilled as her sister and longs for the world beyond the city walls. But overhearing an ancient Greek poem recited aloud, and then meeting the scholar, Licinius, opens up a world of learning and books that promises Anna a path to more.

Not far away, in the same time period, we meet Omeir in the mountains of Bulgaria. The young Ottoman boy is born with a cleft lip, which means certain abandonment by his family. However, his grandfather cannot bear to sacrifice him, so the family leaves their small village to settle in the foothills of the Rhodope Mountains. Omeir and Anna's paths collide after the fall of Constantinople, when they escape the city to start anew.

The narrative moves to post-World War II America where we meet Zeno, another orphan, who ends up in Idaho as the ward of a war widow. As the 1950s dawn, Zeno drives to a recruitment office to become an army private. He is shipped off to the Korean War. Soon after arriving in Korea, he's taken prisoner. In camp, he meets Rex, a British soldier who shares his love of ancient Greek texts with Zeno. This shared interest keeps the horrors of war at bay for a while, until Rex tries to escape, leaving Zeno alone to wonder what became of his friend.

Moving to contemporary Idaho, Seymour joins the tale. The only child of single mother Bunny, he tries to go to school and stay out of trouble. Noises, smells, and sensations all cause Seymour a great bit of distress. It's only when he escapes to the forest behind their trailer that he finds a measure of peace. Progress, however, is never far away, and his sanctuary soon becomes a new development for city folk from Boise. Seymour is outraged and an eco-warrior is born.

Finally, in the future, we meet Konstance onboard the *Argos*, an interstellar generation ship. The eighty-six humans with her are in search of a new planet, as Earth is no longer viable. When she turns ten, Konstance is introduced to the library, where every map, census, book, symphony, genomic map, etc. exists as a heritage of humanity. She learns that this library, also known as Sybil, will help her learn about humanity's past to ensure a future. Konstance will discover that even humanity's best laid plans can go awry.

The ancient Greek text *Cloud Cuckoo Land* by Antonius Diogenes ties these storylines together. Likened to Aristophanes' comedy *The Birds*, the ancient fictional story survives via twenty-four folios. Doerr surprises and delights the reader, with this magical tale reappearing in the most interesting ways in each character's story.

Doerr's work is a tribute to the written word, whether it's on parchment, paper, or digital tablets. Bibliophiles will love the nods to library culture, books, reading, and writing. Best of all, every reader will fall in love with the journey through time that brings them to a satisfying end.

REVIEWED BY ROBIN NESBITT, MLS, COLUMBUS, OH

Goble, Steve. *City Problems: An Ed Runyon Mystery*.

Sarasota, FL: Oceanview Publishing, 2021.

City Problems is the first in a new series following detective Ed Runyon. Runyon relocates from New York City to just outside Columbus, landing in the fictional Mifflin County Sheriff's Office located to the northeast of Columbus, off Alum Creek.

Runyon joins Columbus Police Department Detective Shelly Beckworth, who is investigating the case of a missing girl named Megan Beemer from Upper Arlington, who was last seen at a pop-up party. Beckworth is following up on the various Mifflin County license plates from the parking lot of the party. She needs a local contact.

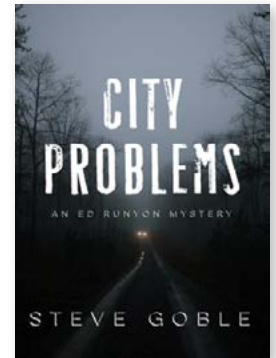
Together, Beckworth and Runyon track down leads, turn over rocks, and listen to lots of loud music. Where could Megan have disappeared to? Was it foul play or did the girl just take off? As they dig, Runyon's ghosts from soul-shattering cases in the Bronx continue to haunt him. Can he overcome the past and concentrate on finding Megan? Is Megan even alive?

Steve Goble writes a gritty mystery filled with crimes that hound both the fictional detectives and the reader. Shifting points of view pull the reader into the hunt for the victim and perpetrators. Short sequences of the victim's experiences are interspersed with the police investigation and shorter pieces by the assailants. All are neatly spliced into the weeklong investigation.

The detectives fit the mold of hardened investigators working hard to listen to suspects and find victims. Readers come to know some of the secondary characters quite well, while some are left open-ended. They'll have to wait until Runyon's next adventure, though, to see who still lives in Mifflin County.

For more thrilling adventures, readers can also check out Goble's four-book series, *The Spider John Mysteries*.

REVIEWED BY MIRIAM KAHN, MLS, COLUMBUS, OH



Welsh-Huggins, Andrew. *An Empty Grave: An Andy Hayes Mystery #7.*

Athens, OH: Swallow Press, 2021.

Columbus author Andrew Welsh-Huggins' latest mystery, *An Empty Grave*, is the seventh investigation for private investigator and ex-OSU football star Andy Hayes.

Andy is cornered by Preston Campbell while eating dinner at Plank's, one of his regular neighborhood eateries in German Village. Campbell wants Hayes to investigate the shooting and death of his father, policeman Howard (Howie) Campbell. The shooting happened in 1979 during a robbery in the University District, but the actual death—a suicide—occurred last month. It's going to be a tough one, so tough Hayes isn't certain he wants to take on the case.

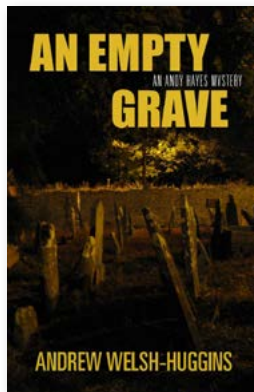
Preston Campbell is a pretty good researcher. He has a thick file of clippings, lots of documents, and best of all, a host of names for Hayes to track down. Sadly, some are dead, but others are missing. Most curious.

The case's twists and turns take Hayes around Columbus, from neighborhoods in Hilliard, Dublin, and Franklinton, then back to Clintonville and his own neighborhood, German Village. Some clues fizzle out and leads turn into more leads, then Hayes is attacked in his own home. That's when Hayes knows he is on the right trail.

Interspersed with the main investigation are personal problems and side-mysteries within Hayes' own family, including get-togethers with his sons Mike and Joe, a few dinners with women from his past and present, and lots of action. Fans of Welsh-Huggins' series will recognize all of the recurring characters.

Andrew Welsh-Huggins writes a taut mystery full of clues and lots of exciting investigation. Readers can either tackle the adventures of Andy Hayes in order starting with *Fourth Down and Out*, or jump right in with this seventh book. You'll love the series no matter what—no football knowledge required.

REVIEWED BY MIRIAM KAHN, MLS, COLUMBUS, OH

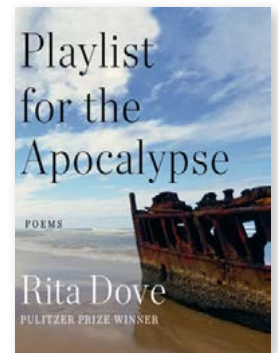


POETRY

Dove, Rita. *Playlist for the Apocalypse.*

New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2021.

When I finished Rita Dove's *Playlist for the Apocalypse*, I had a strong urge to turn back to the beginning. My favorite poetry books often linger in my mind, asking for another glance. Much like a playlist of songs, these poems offer catharsis in times of need.



While the title may seem intimidating, Dove characterizes "the Apocalypse" on the individual and collective level as a series of shifts, failures, and revelations rather than death and destruction. The poet builds many bridges from the personal to the historical, allowing the nature of a "playlist" to mimic how the past insists on the present. The poems are expansive in variety and scope, yet still have a conversational quality as they call back to one another, reminding the reader to pause and reflect.

Playlist for the Apocalypse consists of six vivid sections, beginning with "Time's Arrow," in which the author begins to reveal herself, setting the tone for a journey through verse. The variance in form throughout this section offers a mirror for the characteristics of memory. With Dove's exquisite attention to the senses, the reader can travel seamlessly through fragments and stories, shining a light on the poet's dedication to her craft.

After magnifying her own experiences in a strong, musical voice, the second section vacillates between various personas. These poems were born from a project with Università Ca' Foscari Venezia and Beit Venezia in which artists and writers reflected on the evolution and origin of the word "ghetto." The collaboration was prepared to recognize the 500th anniversary of when the word was first used in 1516 to describe the living quarters where Venetian Jews were involuntarily relocated. "After Egypt" is a bold burst of song reverberating the survival of many communities that have been forced to the margins. Dove has a gift for researching with compassion as she weaves in

the voices of others. This gift of hers has only become stronger with time.

In the third section, a greater shift occurs when Dove moves beyond people and jumps into the voice of “Spring Cricket,” which delighted me as a reader. Her poetic mastery is further revealed as she asks us to bend an ear even closer, showcasing the fact that anthropomorphism is not just for kids. My favorite poem from this section is titled, “The Spring Cricket’s Grievance: Little Outburst:”

*Tired of singing for someone else.
Tired of rubbing my thighs
To catch your ear.*

*When the sky falls tonight,
I’ll stand on my one green leaf*

*And it will be my time,
My noise,
My ecstasy.*

Dove makes it easy to see someone in a new light, giving voice and perspective to the small and ignored. The cricket is unapologetic in voicing his opinion and calling out critics and passive listeners, making this section a beacon of courage and empowerment.

After dazzling the reader with a cricket’s voice, the book centers on the poet’s song cycle project with composer Richard Danielpour titled, “A Standing Witness.” While these poems were meant to be performed at the Tanglewood Music Festival in 2020, they serve as a strong centerpiece in this poetry book. This section offers a reflection on the last fifty-odd years of American history from the perspective of the Statue of Liberty, allowing a singular voice to shine through in testimony. The titles of the poems in “A Standing Witness” are phrases from the sonnet inscribed on Lady Liberty’s pedestal, “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus.

When I flipped to “Eight Angry Odes,” I knew this section would strike a chord with me. If you have ever felt frustrated by the romanticism of poetry, these poems will offer great company. With sharp honesty throughout these poems, I could sense Rita Dove’s frustration with form and language for not always providing the purpose or solace she seeks. I love the way she ends this section with “A Sonnet for the Sonnet,”

calling the form into question while showing that the expression of anger does not equal pessimism. “Eight Angry Odes” reminds the reader that it may not always make sense when anger rears its head—a life truth we can all relate to.

The last section, “Little Book of Woe,” grants us a more intimate conversation with Dove’s personal life. It seems the poet can only trust the reader with this knowledge of her struggles with Multiple Sclerosis after the journey through the first five sections. I especially appreciated the last two sections because Dove’s voice feels free and expressive. She kept her diagnosis from the public for a while, and these poems feel like a release. Dove has learned to live again with a robustness some might envy, but she writes about pain to remind the reader that anger and frustration are also worthy muses.

In reading *Playlist for the Apocalypse*, I experienced how Dove challenges her reader gently and persistently. It seems that poetry is not only her path for reflection, but also her way of making sense of the world. Every poem in this book offers deep contemplation and deserves ample time to be fully seen and heard. Whether she’s remembering the accents of her “Cleveland cousins” or pondering the reality of mortality, Rita Dove brings the reader close, always whispering hope.

REVIEWED BY MIRIAM NORDINE, OHIOANA LIBRARY ASSISTANT

YOUNG ADULT & MIDDLE GRADE

Richards, Natalie D. *Seven Dirty Secrets*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks Fire, 2021.

I KNOW SEVEN SECRETS:

*One caused the fall.
One did nothing.
One saw it all.
One didn’t care.
One used their head.
One played the hero.
One was left for dead.*

On her eighteenth birthday, Cleo receives a mysterious invitation to a scavenger hunt. She’s absolutely



sure that one of her friends is behind the invite, but no one will confess. As Cleo and her friend Hope begin the hunt, the locations and directions, which at first seem random, start to look more and more familiar.

In fact, all the clues seem to be about Cleo’s dead boyfriend, Declan, who drowned during a rafting trip a year earlier. As Cleo and Hope delve into all of the clues, things start to become more sinister, eventually culminating in phone calls from Declan, the *definitely dead* Declan, asking Cleo, “You ready?”

As the clock on the scavenger hunt winds down, it becomes clear that someone knows that something more sinister happened to Declan. And Cleo and her friends are going to pay for it.

Natalie D. Richards’ latest novel of suspense for young adults immediately grabs the reader and doesn’t let go. Like her previous novels, including *Five Total Strangers* and *One Was Lost*, Richards puts us into the head of a teen girl with secrets and the friends she finds out she can’t trust. I have read every one of Richards’ books—including this one—in one sitting, sucked into the tight storytelling and shocking twists she reveals on every page. Richards has a way of making us care about (occasionally reprehensible) characters and hoping these tense situations will work out okay. *Seven Dirty Secrets* will have readers glued to the story, both fearful of and anticipating the next turn of the page until the shocking, satisfying conclusion.

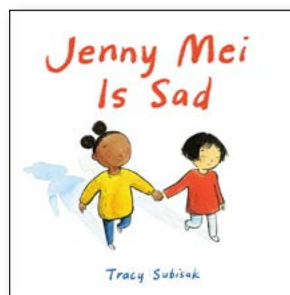
REVIEWED BY COURTNEY BROWN, OHIOANA LIBRARIAN

JUVENILE

Subisak, Tracy. *Jenny Mei Is Sad*.

New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company, 2021.

Jenny Mei is sad, but her best friend is there for her. Jenny Mei appears to be fine—she smiles on the way to school and interacts with friends in class. However, some “not-so-fun” times occur during the day that show her true feelings. What’s Jenny Mei to do? She takes a



break, chats with Ms. Abbott (who is a good listener), and joins her best friend in a quiet walk home. Popsicles, rock-kicking, and tears help a little. What helps the most, though, is a friend by her side for good times, hard times, and all the times in between.

Jenny Mei Is Sad explores a complicated topic in a kid-friendly way. This spare, heartfelt story helps readers understand that sadness can manifest itself in a myriad of behaviors. Author-illustrator Subisak focuses on the characters’ relationship with beautiful illustrations and a rich story behind the simple sentences. The plot does not focus specifically on why Jenny Mei is sad. Sadness comes and goes—there doesn’t have to be a why. This book addresses tough feelings in a meaningful way and can facilitate a discussion about emotions. While the age range listed is for readers four-to-eight years old, middle school students will also benefit from the important message that it’s okay to be sad.

REVIEWED BY KATHY HALSEY, CHILDREN’S WRITER, FORMER SCHOOL LIBRARIAN, OELMA PAST PRESIDENT, AND CO-ASSISTANT REGIONAL ADVISOR FOR CENTRAL & SOUTHERN OHIO SCBWI

Book List

The following books were added to Ohioana's collection in October and November, 2021. Look for them at your local library or bookstore!

NONFICTION

Abdurraqib, Hanif. *A Little Devil in America: Notes in Praise of Black Performance*. New York, NY: Random House, 2021.

A reflection on how Black performance is inextricably woven into the fabric of American culture. Each moment in every examined performance has layers of resonance in Black and white cultures, the politics of American empire, and Abdurraqib's own personal history of love, grief, and performance. *A Little Devil in America* exalts the Black performance that unfolds in specific moments in time and space—from midcentury Paris to the moon, and back down again to a cramped living room in Columbus, Ohio. A finalist for the National Book Award.

Alexander, Brian. *The Hospital: Life, Death, and Dollars in a Small American Town*. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2021.

In Bryan, Ohio, the hospital is losing money, making it vulnerable to big health systems seeking domination, and Phil Ennen, CEO, has been fighting to preserve its independence. Meanwhile, the town itself—located in Ohio's northwest corner with a population of 8,500—is still trying to recover from the Great Recession. As local leaders struggle to address the town's problems, and the hospital fights for its life amid a rapidly consolidating medical and

hospital industry, a thirty-nine-year-old diabetic literally fights for his limbs, and a fifty-five-year-old contractor lies dying in the emergency room. With these and other stories, Alexander strips away the wonkiness of policy to reveal Americans' struggle for health against a powerful system that is stacked against them, yet so fragile it blows apart when the pandemic hits. Culminating with COVID-19, this book offers a blueprint for how we created the crisis we're currently in.

Broome, Brian. *Punch Me Up to the Gods: A Memoir*. Boston, MA: Mariner Books, 2021.

Punch Me Up to the Gods introduces a powerful new talent in Brian Broome. This unforgettable debut chronicles Broome's early years growing up in Ohio as a dark-skinned Black boy harboring crushes on other boys. Broome's experiences—in all their cringe-worthy, hilarious, and heartbreaking glory—reveal a perpetual outsider awkwardly squirming to find his way in. Indiscriminate sex and escalating drug use help to soothe his hurt, young psyche, usually to uproarious and devastating effect. A no-nonsense mother and broken father play crucial roles in this origin story. But it is Broome's voice that shows the true depth of vulnerability for young Black boys that is often quietly near to bursting at the seams.

Crowl, Thomas. *Queen of the Con: From a Spiritualist to the Carnegie Impostor*. Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2021. This meticulously researched book is the first full-length account of the notorious career of Cassie

Chadwick, the Carnegie Impostor, who was the forerunner to more recent female scammers like Theranos founder Elizabeth Holmes or fake heiress Anna Sorokin, the "Soho Grifter." Crowl's engaging storytelling leads readers to consider aspects of gender stereotypes, social and economic class structures, and the ways in which we humans can so often be fooled.

Farmer, Jennifer R. *First and Only: A Black Woman's Guide to Thriving at Work and in Life*. Pine Bush, NY: Broadleaf Books, 2021.

In *First and Only*, trainer and activist Jennifer R. Farmer helps readers learn what is required for the long haul of liberation by providing a roadmap to on-the-job success, challenging systemic racism, and seeking inner healing through the sustaining power of faith. She offers practical strategies for Black women to thrive in workplaces that can be ambivalent about their success, as well as tips and stories from psychologists, activists, and organizational experts that equip Black women to lead others and heal past wounds.

Fairley, Kim. *Shooting Out the Lights: A Memoir*. Berkeley, CA: She Writes Press, 2021.

Shooting Out the Lights is a real-life mystery that explores the challenges faced in a loving marriage, the ongoing, wrenching aftermath of gun violence, and the healing that comes with confronting the past.

Gavazzi, Stephen M., and David J. Staley, eds. *Fulfilling the 21st Century Land-Grant Mission: Essays in Honor of The State*

University's Sesquicentennial Commemoration. Columbus, OH: Trillium, 2020.

Over the past one hundred and fifty years, land-grant universities—America's first public institutions of higher learning—have had a profound impact on the well-being of our nation. Founded by the 1862 Morrill Land Grant Act and signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln, land-grant universities were given a three-part mission: to teach, to conduct research, and to engage communities across each state in order to meet their localized needs. Gathered in honor of The Ohio State University's sesquicentennial celebration, this collection of essays highlights the significant contributions that Ohio State continues to make as part of its twenty-first century land-grant mission.

Geiger, Jennifer. **Witness: Study Guide.** Marion, OH: Avonlea House Publishing, 2019.

Geiger leads her readers into deeper waters of faith through this eight series study guide to her debut novel, *Witness: Life with Jesus through the Eyes of the Disciple He Loved*.

Gibson, Glenn. **Before the Mic: How to Compose Meaningful, Memorable, and Motivational Presentations.** Austin, TX: River Grove Press, 2021.

Glenn Gibson gives tips for creating and writing amazing presentations that are meaningful, memorable, and motivational. Before you begin, you must learn what happens “before the mic.”

Griffith, Michael. **The Speaking Stone: Stories Cemeteries Tell.** Cincinnati, OH: The University of Cincinnati Press, 2021.

The Speaking Stone: Stories Cemeteries Tell is a literary love letter to the joys of wandering through graveyards. While working on a novel, author and longtime Cincinnati resident Michael Griffith starts visiting Spring Grove Cemetery and Arboretum, the nation's third-largest cemetery. Soon he's taking almost daily jaunts, following curiosity and accident wherever they lead. The result is this fascinating collection of essays that emerge from chance encounters with an interesting headstone, odd epitaph, unusual name, or quirk of memory.

Hartley, Ernest. **Remembrances of the Richland Friends Meetinghouse and Cemetery: A Tribute to a Beloved Place of Worship in Millwood Township, Guernsey County, Ohio.** El Dorado, CA: Ernest Hartley Publications, 2017.

In 2017, Ernest Hartley spearheaded efforts to erect an Ohio Historical Marker at the site of the former Richland Meetinghouse—where Elmer Hartley and his wife are interred in the cemetery—and published this local history booklet.

Hartley, Ernest, and Wilford Hartley. **Stories Elmer Likes to Tell.** 2nd ed. El Dorado, CA: Ernest Hartley Publications, 2021.

The recollections of Barnesville farmer and Quaker Elmer Hartley, along with family and Quaker history, are collected in a 146-page illustrated book.

Haygood, Wil. **Colorization: One Hundred Years of Black Films in a White World.** New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2021.

This unprecedented history of Black cinema examines one hundred years

of Black movies—from *Gone with the Wind* to Blaxploitation films to *Black Panther*—using the struggles and triumphs of the artists, and the films themselves, as a prism to explore Black culture, civil rights, and racism in America. From the acclaimed author of *The Butler* and *Showdown*.

Martin, Lee. **Gone the Hard Road: A Memoir.** Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2021.

Pulitzer Prize finalist Lee Martin builds from his acclaimed first memoir, *From Our House*, which recounts the farming accident that cost his father both his hands. *Gone the Hard Road* is the story of Beulah Martin's endurance and sacrifice as a mother, and the gift of imagination she offered her son. Rather than concentrate on the life his father threatened to destroy, as Martin's previous memoirs do, *Gone the Hard Road* offers the counternarrative of a loving mother and the creative life she made possible, in spite of the eventual cost to herself.

Miltner, Robert. **Ohio Apertures.** Wausau, WI: Cornerstone Press, 2021.

Ohio Apertures is a collection of brief pieces of creative nonfiction that turns its attention to northeast Ohio's position as both a Great Lakes state and the north coast of America. Its two dozen selections—which include flash memoir, lyric essays, narrative nonfiction, literary nonfiction, and travel writing—trace the author's life from early childhood onward, offering a template for understanding the impact of place, region, family, literacy, and cultural influence on the shaping of a Midwest identity.

Patterson, Dan, and Clinton Terry. *Surveying in Early America: The Point of Beginning, An Illustrated History*. Cincinnati, OH: University of Cincinnati Press, 2021.

In *Surveying in Early America: The Point of Beginning, An Illustrated History*, award-winning photographer Dan Patterson and American historian Clinton Terry vividly examine the profession of surveying in the eighteenth century. Retracing the steps Washington and other surveyors took to map the Ohio River Valley, readers are immersed in historically accurate details of early surveying techniques and practices. Terry's narrative describes the practice of land and survey measurement—methods that did not substantially change until the invention of GPS technology two hundred years later. Over one hundred full color photographs exclusively shot for the book depict authentic and historically accurate reproductions of tools, along with early American reenactors, to provide an interpretive look at surveying as a primary means to building the American nation.

Pulizzi, Joe. *Content Inc: Start a Content-First Business, Build a Massive Audience, and Become Radically Successful (With Little to No Money)*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education, 2021. From one of today's leading experts in content marketing, *Content Inc.* is the go-to guide for building a solid small business by establishing a loyal audience before you sell products or services.

Ricca, Brad. *True Raiders: The Untold Story of the 1909 Expedition to Find the Legendary Ark of the Covenant*. New York, NY:

St. Martin's Press, 2021.

This book tells the untold true story of Monty Parker, a rogue British nobleman who—after being dared to do so by Ava Astor, the so-called “most beautiful woman in the world”—headed a secret 1909 expedition to find the fabled Ark of the Covenant. Like a real-life version of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, this incredible story of adventure and mystery has almost been completely forgotten today. Using recently uncovered records from the original expedition and several newly translated sources, *True Raiders* is the first retelling of this group's adventures—in the space between fact and faith, science and romance.

Robinson, Phoebe. *Please Don't Sit on My Bed in Your Outside Clothes: Essays*. New York, NY: Tiny Reparations Books, 2021. In her brand-new collection, Cleveland native and *2 Dope Queens* comedian Phoebe Robinson shares stories that will make you laugh, but also plenty that will hit you in the heart and inspire a little bit of rage—and maybe a lot of action. That means sharing her perspective on performative allyship, white guilt, and what happens when white people take up space in cultural movements; exploring what it's like to be a woman who doesn't want kids living in a society where motherhood is the crowning achievement of a straight, cis woman's life; and how the dire state of mental health in America means that taking care of one's mental health—also known as “self-care”—usually requires disposable money.

Smythe, Kathleen, and Chris Hanlin. *Bicycling Through Paradise: Historical Tours Around*

Cincinnati. Cincinnati, OH: The University of Cincinnati Press, 2021. *Bicycling Through Paradise* is a collection of twenty historically-themed cycling tours broken into ten-mile segments centered around Cincinnati, Ohio. Written by two longtime cyclists—one a professor of history and one an architect—the book is an affectionate, intimate, and provocative reading of the local landscape and history from the perspective of cycling.

Talzoya. *The Traits of Powerful People*. Copley, OH: Voltis Press, 2021.

If you have ever yearned to feel more in control of your life, obtain the power to determine your own fate, and be happier, healthier, and more productive, Talzoya explains the science behind dominance motivation and the rules of power play in our everyday lives. This book is a must-read to understand how power really works, so that you can live life on your own terms, get people to do what you want them to do, and have an impact in the world.

Thompson, Cornelia Cattell. *The Country Doctor's Wife*. Edited by Angela Feenerty. Huron, OH: Bottom Dog Press, 2021.

Cornelia Cattell Thompson, the wife of country doctor Jay Ira Thompson, vibrantly writes about the challenges of living both in the shadows and at the center of her husband's vocation.

FICTION

Berry, Connie. *The Art of Betrayal: A Kate Hamilton Mystery*. New York, NY: Crooked Lane Books, 2021. In Connie Berry's third *Kate*

Hamilton Mystery, American antique dealer Kate Hamilton's spring is cut short when a body turns up at the May Fair pageant.

Bryan, Kinley. *Sisters of the Sweetwater Fury*. Hilton Head, SC: Blue Mug Press, 2021.

On November 8, 1913, a deadly storm descends on the Great Lakes, bringing hurricane-force winds, whiteout blizzard conditions, and mountainous waves that last for days. Amidst the chaos, three women are offered a glimpse of the clarity they seek, if only they dare to perceive it. Inspired by actual events during the 1913 Great Lakes Storm.

Chansarkar, Sara Siddiqui. *Morsels of Purple*. Raleigh, NC: Alien Buddha Press, 2021.

This debut flash fiction collection includes fifty-four stories which highlight life's more bruising moments.

Consolino, Christina. *Rewrite the Stars*. Castroville, TX: Black Rose Writing, 2021.

Mother-of-three Sadie Rollins-Lancaster struggles with a crumbling marriage she had hoped to salvage. Though her husband, Theo, initiated the divorce, he's now having a change of heart that's difficult to reconcile as he fights against PTSD demons within. When a chance encounter with a stranger resurrects emotions in Sadie she never expected to feel again, her world is turned upside down. Will Sadie find the courage to shape her own future? Will Theo resolve his internal struggles and win Sadie back?

Davidson, Karin Cecile. *Sybelia Drive*. Braddock, PA: Braddock

Avenue Books, 2020.

In the small lake town where LuLu, Rainey, and Saul are growing up, day-to-day life is anything but easy. Navigating the usual obstacles of youth would be enough for anyone, but for this trio, a world marred by the Vietnam war, detached parents, and untimely death create circumstances overloaded with trouble. Yet through their unyielding resourcefulness and the willingness to expose their vulnerabilities, these three friends discover deeper bonds than even they could ever imagine.

DiFrancesco, Alex. *Transmutation: Stories*. New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2021.

Building on the success of 2019 Ohioana Book Award-finalist *All City*, *Transmutation: Stories* is a wry—and at the same time dark and risk-taking—story collection from author Alex DiFrancesco that pushes the boundaries of transgender awareness and filial bonds.

Doerr, Anthony. *Cloud Cuckoo Land*. New York, NY: Scribner, 2021.

Set in Constantinople in the fifteenth century, in a small town in present-day Idaho, and on an interstellar ship decades from now, Anthony Doerr's third novel is a story of imagination and compassion—a tale about children on the cusp of adulthood in worlds in peril, who find resilience, hope . . . and a book. *Cloud Cuckoo Land* was a finalist for the National Book Award and longlisted for the 2022 Andrew Carnegie Medal.

Ellis, Mary. *100 Proof Murder (Bourbon Tour Mystery #2)*.

London, UK: Severn House, 2021. Travel writer Jill Curtis is in

Louisville, Kentucky, on the next stop of her bourbon tour assignment and is keen to explore the local distilleries with her videographer, Michael Erickson—especially since her new beau, Lieutenant Nick Harris, lives in the city. But the night before Jill's first tour at Parker's Distillery, she is shocked to learn that the master distiller, William Scott, has died suddenly of a heart attack—and even more shocked when she discovers William's daughter, Alexis, suspects foul play. Is there more to William's death than meets the eye? Jill is soon drawn into a deadly blend of rivalry, jealousy, and cold-blooded murder as she attempts to uncover the truth behind William's unexpected demise.

Ford, Jeffrey. *Big Dark Hole and Other Stories*. Easthampton, MA: Small Beer Press, 2021.

A Jeffrey Ford story may start out in the innocuous and routine world of college teaching or evenings on a porch with your wife. But inevitably, the weird comes crashing in. Maybe it's an unexpected light in a dark and uninhabited house, or maybe it's a drainage tunnel that some poor kid is suddenly compelled to explore. Maybe there's a monkey in the woods or an angel that you'll need to fight if you want to gain tenure. *Big Dark Hole* is about those big dark holes that we find ourselves in once in a while, and maybe, too, the big dark holes that exist inside of us.

Foster, Lori. *The Summer of No Attachments*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: HQN, 2021.

After putting the brakes on her dead-end relationship, local veterinarian Ivey Anders is ready to soak up this summer on her own terms. The

way she sees it, no dating means no disappointment. Why complicate life with anything long-term? But when she meets Corbin Meyer—and his troubled young son, Justin—Ivey’s no-strings strategy threatens to unravel before she can put it into practice.

Geiger, Jennifer. *Witness: Life with Jesus through the Eyes of the Disciple He Loved*. Marion, OH: Avonlea House Publishing, 2018. Witness the life of Jesus as shared through the eyes of John, the disciple He loved. Debut author Jennifer Geiger echoes the Apostle’s heart in this firsthand testament of hope, loss, and irrevocable joy.

Gornichec, Genevieve. *The Witch’s Heart*. New York, NY: Ace, 2021. When a banished witch falls in love with the legendary trickster Loki, she risks the wrath of the gods in this subversive national bestselling debut novel that reimagines Norse mythology.

Hammond, Eileen Curley. *Murder So Tempting (Merry March Mysteries #6)*. Galloway, OH: Twody Press, 2021. Merry returns to Hopeful, becomes engaged, and jumps more than a few hurdles to get to happily-ever-after when her overzealous mother-in-law plans the ceremony. Unfortunately, that’s the least of her worries as an attendee at her marriage preparation class dies from a tragic overdose. Was it an accident or murder?

Hutchinson, L. E. *Where the Stepping Stones Lead*. Palatine, IL: Anchor Book Press, 2021. In 1917, young Gracie Pollock packs her suitcase then hurries off to catch the train to Washington,

D.C., where she has landed a job as a government girl. She is ecstatic about her future until she meets Mr. Clark, a passenger on the train, who informs her of the housing shortages in the busy capital. Gracie becomes distressed, realizing that she might be sleeping on a bench in Union Station. However, the unexpected happens when Mr. Clark invites Gracie to his home and Mrs. Clark graciously accepts her as a guest. Mr. and Mrs. Clark are eager to help a government girl. Unbeknownst to Gracie, the Clarks are a wealthy family and can enhance her opportunities to lead a successful life, with many twists and turns—including mystery and romance—along the way.

Hyde, Allegra. *Eleutheria*. New York, NY: Vintage, 2022. Willa Marks has spent her whole life choosing hope. She chooses hope over her parents’ paranoid conspiracy theories, over her dead-end job, over the rising ocean levels. And when she meets Sylvia Gill, renowned Harvard professor, she feels she’s found the justification of that hope. Sylvia is the woman-in-black: the only person smart and sharp enough to compel the world to action. But when Sylvia betrays her, Willa fears she has lost hope forever. Then she finds a book in Sylvia’s library: a guide to fighting climate change called *Living the Solution*. Inspired by its message and with nothing to lose, Willa flies to the island of Eleutheria in the Bahamas to join the book’s author and his group of ecowarriors at Camp Hope. Upon arrival, things are not what she expected. The group’s leader, author Roy Adams, is missing, and the compound’s public launch is delayed. With time running out, Willa will

stop at nothing to realize Camp Hope’s mission—but at what cost?

Krishnan, Bharat. *Privilege: A Trilogy*. Quincy, IL: Indies United Publishing House, LLC, 2021. In this epic saga about privilege and power, Rakshan Baliga will have to choose between the American Dream . . . and his own. New York’s drug problem is Rakshan’s solution. Getting his hands on a super drug called WP could earn him glory, power, and a chance to win back his ex. But stealing it from the Top 1% is costly, and if Rakshan isn’t careful, he’ll pay with his life. Discover how Rakshan’s journey sets off a chain of events that changes his city, his country, and the world.

Logan, Kylie. *A Trail of Lies (Jazz Ramsey Mystery #3)*. New York, NY: Minotaur Books, 2021. Jazz Ramsey is just getting used to the idea that her on-again-off-again beau, Nick, might actually be a permanent fixture, when she gets an alarming call in the middle of the night from his mother, Kim: there’s a dead man in her backyard. Kim has a long history of drinking and a vivid imagination, so when Jazz’s human remains detection dog, Wally, finds no evidence of a body, Jazz thinks she can breathe easy. But when the body of a middle-aged man, Dan Mansfield, is discovered in a nearby park, and a photo of Nick and his mom is found in his pocket, Jazz has to admit that something isn’t adding up. Kim claims not to know who Dan is, but the cops find out soon enough: he’s a recently paroled convict who served thirty years for murder. And when Jazz traces his crime back to a bar fight with an antiques dealer, she ends up with more questions than answers.

McLain, Paula. *When the Stars Go Dark*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 2021.

Anna Hart is a seasoned missing persons detective in San Francisco with far too much knowledge of the darkest side of human nature. When tragedy strikes her personal life, Anna, desperate and numb, flees to the Northern California village of Mendocino to grieve. She lived there as a child with her beloved foster parents, and now she believes it might be the only place left for her. Yet the day she arrives, she learns that a local teenage girl has gone missing. The crime feels frighteningly reminiscent of the most crucial time in Anna's childhood, when the unsolved murder of a young girl touched Mendocino and changed the community forever. As past and present collide, Anna realizes that she has been led to this moment.

Miller, Darin. *Reunion (Dwayne Morrow Mysteries #1)*. Grove City, OH: Darin Miller, 2021.

An invitation to his high school reunion prompts Dwayne Morrow to return to his small-town roots to reconnect with friends he hasn't seen in fifteen years. Before the festivities can even begin, his best friend is found murdered in his car, and the local police show little interest in pursuing the case. A mother's plea pulls Dwayne into a tangled web of dangerous secrets and shady characters. Old friends and new acquaintances ensure that Dwayne's life will never be the same again.

Paul, Michael. *Cornerstone: The King*. Raleigh, NC: Michael Paul, LLC, 2021.

This is a story of loss and grief and

how the many shapes of love lead Jeremiah and Jameela to form a fiery bond, battle their internal demons, and learn the secret the queen has kept hidden. But can they unlock the secrets of the stone? The fate of the Kingdom depends on it.

Pulizzi, Joe. *The Will to Die*. Cleveland, OH: Z Squared Media, LLC, 2020.

When Will Pollitt returns home for his father's funeral, he discovers a string of similar deaths—and his family's connection to a shocking conspiracy. This novel was awarded Best Suspense Book for the 2020 National Indie Excellence Awards.

Richards, Emilie. *The House Guests*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Mira Books, 2021.

In the wake of her husband's sudden death, Cassie Costas finds her relationship with her teenage stepdaughter unraveling. After their move to historic Tarpon Springs, Florida, Savannah hates her new town, her school, and most of all her stepmom, whom she blames for her father's death. Cassie has enough to contend with as she searches for answers about the man she shared a life with, including why all their savings have disappeared. When Savannah's rebellion culminates in an act that leaves single mother Amber Blair and her sixteen-year-old son homeless, Cassie empathizes with the woman's predicament and invites the strangers to move in. As their lives intertwine, Cassie realizes that Amber is hiding something. She's evasive about her past, but the fear in her eyes tells a darker story. Cassie wonders what the woman living under her roof is running from . . . and what will happen if it finally catches up to her.

Rouda, Kaira. *The Next Wife*. Seattle, WA: Thomas & Mercer, 2021.

There is no limit to the lies, suspicion, and secrets that can poison the perfect marriage in this twisting novel of suspense by USA Today bestselling author Kaira Rouda.

Sapp, Gregg. *Murder By Valentine Candy (Holidazed Book #4)*. Butler, WI: Evolved Publishing, 2021.

On Valentine's Day, notorious bad boy and right-wing podcaster Adam Erb is found dead in the back of his limousine, his mouth stuffed full of erectile dysfunction pills disguised as candy hearts. Huck Carp, an adversary of Erb's and a doctoral student in applied sociology, suggests to police that the perpetrator is a severe psychopath. Imagine his surprise when, in front of his would-be girlfriend, they arrest him for the crime. To prove his innocence—and save his relationship—Huck must utilize all his academic research skills. Aided by friends from his favorite donut shop, he follows the trail of evidence from viral social media hashtags to private performances at the Booti Tooti Gentlemen's Club, and behind the velvet curtain at the mysterious Society of Enlightened Celibate Savants (SECS). Huck is an intellectual, not a lover, but the deeper he probes, the more he realizes that solving this crime will require him to look into his own heart.

Silver, Marisa. *The Mysteries*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021.

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Mary Coin*, and the Ohioana Book Award-winning *Little*

Nothing, comes an intimate story of two young girls, joined in an unlikely friendship, whose lives are shattered in a single, unthinkable moment.

Smith, Jamie Lyn. *Township*. Stevens Point, WI: Cornerstone Press, 2022.
Set in Appalachian Ohio, Jamie Lyn Smith's debut short story collection explores a region and the rotating cast of characters who call it home. With honesty and empathy, Smith closely examines the strains that intimate family ties put on lives worn raw by collective history. Ultimately, the nine stories in *Township* interrogate the notion of reconciliation, examining whether people can truly change and if forgiveness is possible.

Tassone, Don. *Francesca*. New York, NY: Adelaide Books, 2021.
It is 2055, and there's a new pope. It's Jessica Simon, an American, a wife, and a mother. She's taken the name Francesca. A lifelong advocate for the poor, she believes the Catholic Church must return to Jesus' teachings and bring God to life in the world. But powerful forces are aligned against her. They see Francesca as a threat. Some will stop at nothing to stop her. Will Pope Francesca survive? Will she succeed in reforming the Church? In an hour of darkness, can she rekindle the light?

POETRY

Anderson-Bartholet, Pamela R. *The Galloping Garbage Truck*. American Fork, UT: Kelsay Books, 2021.
Pamela Anderson-Bartholet uses a

light touch on such weighty topics as diversity and difference, self-affirmation, feminism, healthy lifestyle choices (kale salad!), optimism and resilience, and (not) judging by appearance.

Anderson-Bartholet, Pamela R. *Widow Maker*. Georgetown, KY: Finishing Line Press, 2021.
Widow Maker is an intimate lyric account of a wife's crossing the threshold of cardiac trauma where "we breathe metrics" after a husband's failed heart "snaps . . . in half" the speaker's own heart.

Bracken, Conor. *The Enemy of My Enemy is Me*. Richmond, VA: Diode Editions, 2021.
In his debut collection of poems, Conor Bracken traces the nerves of toxic masculinity—white as maggots but taut as lyre strings—that twitch and fizz inside events as homegrown as school shootings and as distant as the execution of medieval French heretics.

Dove, Rita. *Playlist for the Apocalypse: Poems*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2021.
In her first volume of new poems in twelve years, Rita Dove investigates the vacillating moral compass guiding America's, and the world's, experiments in democracy. Whether depicting the first Jewish ghetto in sixteenth-century Venice or the contemporary efforts of Black Lives Matter, a girls' night clubbing in the shadow of World War II or the doomed nobility of Muhammad Ali's conscious objector stance, this extraordinary poet never fails to connect history's grand exploits to the triumphs and tragedies of individual lives.

Giovanni, Nikki. *Make Me Rain: Poems & Prose*. New York, NY: William Morrow Paperbacks, 2021.
For more than fifty years, Nikki Giovanni's poetry has dazzled and inspired readers. As sharp and outspoken as ever, she returns with this profound book of poetry in which she continues to call attention to injustice and racism, celebrate Black culture and Black lives, and give readers an unfiltered look into her own experiences. In *Make Me Rain*, she celebrates her loved ones and unapologetically declares her pride in her Black heritage, while exploring the enduring impact of the twin sins of racism and white nationalism.

Hambrick, Jennifer. *In the High Weeds*. Oscoda, MI: NFSPS Press, 2021.
A collection of poetry selected as winner of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies' 2020 Stevens Manuscript Competition.

Hambrick, Jennifer. *joyride: haibun*. Winchester, VA: Red Moon Press, 2021.
Hambrick takes us on journeys filled with humanity, humor, insight, loss, and renewal. Crisp and refreshingly clear, her uniquely musical voice anchors these multi-layered haibun gems in wonder.

Kim, Joey S. *Body Facts*. Richmond, VA: Diode Editions, 2021.
Body Facts tells the story of a speaker who is Korean, American, woman, and body. It weaves together Korean history and aesthetics, the speaker's childhood and family stories, U.S. foreign policy with North Korea, and the things we do and shouldn't do to our bodies.

Knott, Kip. *Clean Coal Burn*. American Fork, UT: Kelsay Books, 2021.

In Kip Knott's *Clean Coal Burn*, the rural beauty of southeastern Ohio is threatened by coal, sulfur, and fire—images of mining and mortality. But natural beauty and human love keep trying to hold on.

Knott, Kip. *Tragedy, Ecstasy, Doom, and So On*. American Fork, UT: Kelsay Books, 2020.

The passions of artist Mark Rothko and juxtapositions of life inspire Kip Knott's first full-length poetry collection, *Tragedy, Ecstasy, Doom, and So On*.

Sandella, T. J. *Ways to Beg*. New York, NY: Black Lawrence Press, 2021.

The poems in *Ways to Beg* are in constant conversation. They speak to and of each other—to ancestors, gods, pets, strangers on planes, and, most often, directly to the reader. Their aim is mutual inquiry. They want to swap stories and jokes and secrets, to stay up all night, refilling your beverage of choice, diligently pursuing the unsaid and the unsayable. In short, they want to ask the right questions. They want to deliberate how we've come to inhabit our bodies, our families, our grief, our country, our planet—and how we intend to make good on that lonesome and curious responsibility.

Santer, Rikki. *How to Board a Moving Ship*. Whitman, MA: Lily Poetry Review, 2021.

Rikki Santer's *How to Board a Moving Ship* is a collection of poetry that makes the familiar brilliantly strange again.

Stone, Myrna. *The Resurrectionist's Diary*. Loveland, OH: Dos Madres Press, 2021.

Within these pages, Myrna Stone explores both love and death and the matters of the heart to which they are inextricably tied.

MIDDLE GRADE & YOUNG ADULT

Borden, Louise. *Full Speed Ahead! America's First Admiral: David Glasgow Farragut*. New York, NY: Calkins Creek, 2021.

Discover the man behind everyone's favorite call to action, "Full speed ahead!" in this inspiring and engaging biography about the first Admiral of the United States Navy, David Glasgow Farragut.

Campbell, Marcy. *Rule of Threes*. San Francisco, CA: Chronicle Books, 2021.

An interior design enthusiast, twelve-year-old Maggie Owens is accustomed to living her life according to her own precise plans. But when she learns about Tony, a mysterious half-brother her own age who needs a place to stay, any semblance of a plan is shattered. Tony's mom struggles with an addiction to opioids, and now she's called upon Maggie's dad—who is also Tony's dad—to take him in. On top of everything, Maggie must also come to terms with the Alzheimer's afflicting her beloved grandmother. While Maggie can strive for—and even succeed in—a picture perfect design, when it comes to family, there is no such thing as perfection. To work through the struggles rocking her world, Maggie must have an open heart.

Hamilton, Virginia. *Five Novels*. Edited by Julie K. Rubini. New York, NY: The Library of America, 2021.

Rediscover America's most honored writer of children's literature in this deluxe collector's edition of her finest work: five classic novels about African American young people confronting the world and its many challenges. Playing out themes of memory, folklore, and tradition in enthralling, often wildly inventive stories, Virginia Hamilton transformed American children's literature in the 1960s and 70s. Her award-winning novels brought Black characters center stage, creating a multifaceted portrait of African American life that she called "liberation literature."

McGinnis, Mindy. *The Initial Insult*. New York, NY: Katherine Tegen Books, 2021.

In the first book of a suspenseful YA duology, award-winning author Mindy McGinnis draws inspiration from Edgar Allan Poe and masterfully delivers a dark, propulsive mystery in alternating points of view that unravels a friendship . . . forevermore.

Norris, Kate. *When You and I Collide*. New York, NY: Philomel Books, 2021.

Sixteen-year-old Winnie Schulde has always seen splits—the moment when two possible outcomes diverge, one in her universe and one in another. Multiverse theory, Winnie knows, is all too real, though she has never been anything but an observer of its implications—a secret she keeps hidden from just about everyone, as she knows the uses to which it might be put in the midst of a raging WWII. But her physicist father, wrapped up in his research

and made cruel by his grief after the loss of Winnie’s mother, believes that if he pushes her hard enough, she can choose one split over another and maybe, just maybe, change their future and their past. Winnie is certain that her father’s theories are just that, so she plays along in an effort to placate him. But one day, her father’s experiment goes wrong and Scott, the kind and handsome lab assistant Winnie loves from afar, is seriously injured. Without meaning to, Winnie chooses the split where Scott is unharmed. And in doing so, finds herself pulled into another universe—an alternate reality. One that already has a Winnie.

Patterson, James, and Mindy McGinnis. *City of the Dead (Maximum Ride: Hawk #2)*. New York, NY: Jimmy Patterson, 2021. Hawk, the daughter of Maximum Ride, teams up with her mother to help save their beloved but dangerous city in this action-packed thriller.

Stamper, Phil. *As Far as You’ll Take Me*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury YA, 2021.

Marty arrives in London with nothing but his oboe and some savings from his summer job, but he’s excited to start his new life—where he’s no longer the closeted, shy kid who slips under the radar and is free to explore his sexuality without his parents’ disapproval. From the outside, Marty’s life looks like a perfect fantasy: in the span of a few weeks, he’s made new friends, he’s getting closer with his first ever boyfriend, and he’s even traveling around Europe. But Marty knows he can’t keep up the facade. He hasn’t spoken to his parents since

he arrived, he’s tearing through his meager savings, his homesickness and anxiety are getting worse and worse, and he hasn’t even come close to landing the job of his dreams. Will Marty be able to find a place that feels like home?

Strickland, Frances Smith. *The Little Girl Who Grew Up to be Governor: Leadership Lessons and Stories from the Life of Martha Layne Collins*. 2nd ed. Illus. by Pip Pullen. Dublin, OH: The Compassionate Mind Collaborative, 2021.

The Little Girl Who Grew Up to Be Governor teaches leadership skills to young readers using the inspirational story of Kentucky’s first woman governor, Martha Layne Collins. Collins accomplished what many thought impossible and was elected Governor of Kentucky in 1983. Governor Collins spent her term focused on improving the lives of Kentuckians through collaboration and nonpartisan politics. Drawing on the established principles of leadership from John W. Gardner and psychologist Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences, this updated edition focuses on central themes of helpfulness, resilience, planning, kindness, using your strengths, courage, and service for the next generation of leaders.

Warga, Jasmine. *The Shape of Thunder*. New York, NY: Balzer + Bray, 2021.

Cora hasn’t spoken to her best friend, Quinn, in a year. Despite living next door to each other, they exist in separate worlds of grief. Cora grapples with the tragic death of her sister in a school shooting, while Quinn carries the guilt of what her

brother did. But on the day of Cora’s twelfth birthday, Quinn leaves a box on her doorstep with a note. Quinn has decided that the only way to fix things is to go back in time to the moment before her brother changed all their lives forever—and stop him. In spite of herself, Cora wants to believe, so the two former friends begin working together to unravel the mysteries of time travel. This second novel by Jasmine Warga—Newbery Honor and Ohioana Book Award-winning author of *Other Words for Home*—is about loss, healing, and how friendship can be magical.

JUVENILE

Bonilla, Lindsay. *I Love You with All of My Hearts*. Illus. by Eleonora Pace. Mankato, MN: Creative Editions, 2021.

Animals come in many shapes and sizes—some have large ears, others have distinctive noses, and still others have far too many eyes! They express emotions in different ways, too, but one thing remains the same: love.

Campbell, Marcy. *Something Good*. Illus. by Corinna Luyken. New York, NY: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers, 2021.

A sensitive, timely and ultimately uplifting portrayal of how an elementary school struggles, copes, and heals together after “something bad” is discovered written on the wall.

Daywalt, Drew. *Twinkle Twinkle Little Kid*. Illus. by Molly Idle. New York, NY: Philomel Books, 2021. A story of wishes and friendship

by Drew Daywalt, the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Day the Crayons Quit*, and Molly Idle, the Caldecott Honor-winning illustrator of *Flora and the Flamingo*. Everyone knows that kids wish upon stars, but did you know that stars wish upon kids, too?

Ebbeler, Jeffrey. ***A Giant Mess (I Like to Read Comics)***. New York, NY: Holiday House, 2021.

Molly doesn't want to clean her room; she wants to play. Before Molly can argue with her mom, they hear BOOM! BOOM! A giant toddler is on the loose! Now it's messy Molly's turn to deal with a "giant" mess.

Gorman, Amanda. ***Change Sings: A Children's Anthem***. Illus. by Loren Long. New York, NY: Viking Books for Young Readers, 2021.

In this much-anticipated picture book by presidential inaugural poet and activist Amanda Gorman, anything is possible when our voices join together. As a young girl leads a cast of characters on a musical journey, they learn that they have the power to make changes—big or small—in the world, in their communities, and most importantly, in themselves.

Grant, Jacob. ***No Pants!*** New York, NY: Viking Books for Young Readers, 2021.

Pablo and his dad are ready for a great day. It's party day! A cookout with the whole family. All they need to do is get ready. Eat breakfast. Brush teeth. Put on pants. And they'll be ready to go! Only Pablo has another idea: No Pants!

Hall, Andrea. ***She's On the Money***. Illus. by Li Zhang. Park Ridge, IL: Albert Whitman and Company, 2021.

Queen Cleopatra had coins made with her face on them. Japan put writer Ichiyō Higuchi on the 5,000 yen note more than one hundred years after her death. And Eva Perón was the first Argentine woman on a bill. These biographies examine fifteen extraordinary women who have appeared on coins or bills—and how they got there. Each inspiring story also digs deeper into different currencies and the customs of the time period.

Houts, Michelle. ***Barn at Night***.

Illus. by Jen Betton. Washington, DC: Feeding Minds Press, 2021. When you grow up on a farm, adventures happen all day long—even at night! On a cold winter evening, a father and daughter go out to the barn and are welcomed with a warm scene. Who is awake, who is asleep, and who is just making their first appearance in the barn?

Mixon, Dia. ***One Whole Me***. Illus. by Natalia Jiménez Osorio. Columbus, OH: Mia Dixon, 2021.

Being bicultural is a wonderful thing! Follow along as a Colombian-American child embraces both cultures that make him unique. This lighthearted story, written in a blend of Spanish & English, showcases language, food, family, music, and more. It will inspire children to be proud of who they are and to never forget what makes them special.

Mora, Pat. ***My Magic Wand: Growing with the Seasons***. Illus. by Amber Alvarez. New York, NY: Lee & Low Books, 2021.

A collection of poems celebrating a

young child's growth and everyday experiences throughout the seasons of a year.

Ries, Jane E. ***Bully the Pest: A Tick with an Attitude!*** Columbus, OH: Ries Design, 2021.

Bully the Pest is a cowboy tick looking for trouble. He swaggers into the town of Wild, Wild West World where he meets up with Sheriff Roller. Just when they lock eyes, a stampede of bugs rushes in to meet Sheriff Roller. Bully doesn't get a chance to bully the folks of Wild, Wild West World. Instead, he is introduced to the most amazing amusement park ever. He makes new friends and has a swell time. The story takes a surprising turn when the Buzzing McBee Gang appears looking for trouble. Can Bully the Pest find the courage to face the Buzzing McBee Gang and make them skedaddle?

Wheeler, Lisa. ***Someone Builds the Dream***. Illus. by Loren Long. New York, NY: Dial Books, 2021.

Buildings, bridges, and books don't exist without the workers who are often invisible in the final product, as this joyous and profound picture book reveals from Lisa Wheeler, acclaimed author of *The Christmas Boot*, and *New York Times* bestselling illustrator Loren Long.

Thank You!

The Ohioana Library wouldn't be the unique organization it is without our many generous supporters. Listed below are those who have given from September 1, 2021, through November 30, 2021. Special thanks to Governor Mike DeWine and the Ohio General Assembly for the state's ongoing support.

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Why I Support Ohioana

I support the Ohioana Library Association not only because of its historic legacy and longstanding dedication to collect and promote literary, creative, and artistic endeavors of Ohioans since 1929, but because of its continuously innovative efforts to engage, enlighten, and inspire readers by amplifying the voices of Ohio's vastly diverse creative thinkers and writers.

Being a proud member of our LGBTQIA+ communities, I am thrilled and inspired by Ohioana's focused and intentional efforts to celebrate the unique lived experiences of our queer authors by shining a bright light on their thought leadership. Great examples of these efforts are current and past winners of the Ohioana Book Awards: Rachel Wiley's cutting-edge book *Nothing Is Okay*, and Carter Sickels' *The Prettiest Star*, which *The Los Angeles Review of Books* calls an essential "Queer Homecoming as an arrival, not a return." How Ohioana works to amplify the voices and perspectives of our queer communities gives me hope for a more just, inclusive, enlightened, and loving society.

Further, there is so much to learn about and find awe in the literary prowess of our great state of Ohio. Thanks to Ohioana's new Ohio Literary Trail, we are given a chance to dive deeper into the experiences of time-honored writers. The Trail celebrates Toni Morrison and her hometown of Lorain, including her first job in her local library; Malabar Farm, the 900-acre futuresque, eco-friendly, and sustainable farm of Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist, screenwriter, and conservationist Louis Bromfield; and Paul Laurence Dunbar's Dayton home, which pays tribute to Dunbar's esteemed poetry that influenced Maya Angelou.

Additionally, the annual Ohioana Book Awards and Ohioana Book Festival have exposed me to the magical talents of contemporary writers like Kazim Ali, Hanif Abdurraqib, Marianne Chan, Wil Haygood, Jacqueline Woodson, and so many others. These events offer each author the opportunity to speak their voice so that we can learn from them and truly hear their ingenuity.

Join me today in celebrating the legacy and everlasting impact of Ohio's most creative, unique, and impactful thinkers. Join me in thanking Ohioana for bringing us all together, continually offering opportunities to engage with our authors and their works, and advocating for great writers who are so vital to Ohio and the world.



David Siders is Civic Engagement Coordinator with the Cincinnati & Hamilton County Library and an Ohioana Board of Trustees member since 2014.

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