

# *BROADLEAF WRITERS ASSOCIATION PRESENTS*

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8th Annual Broadleaf  
Writers Conference

September 23-24, 2023

Decatur Library  
Decatur, Georgia

Write. Now.

Write. Now.



Write. Now.

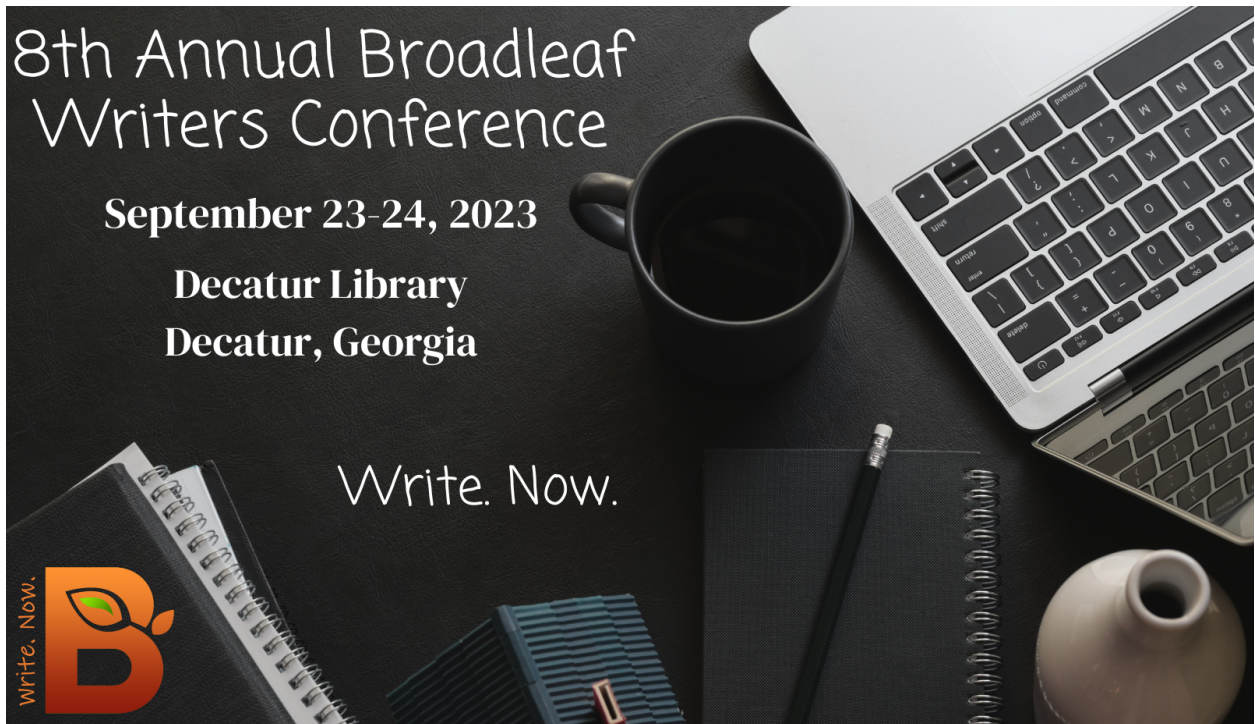


*September 23-24, 2023  
Decatur Library  
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Write. Now.



# 8th Annual Broadleaf Writers Conference Program



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**Don't forget to [fill out your post-conference survey!](#)**

This is vital information to our organization,  
and it assists in our efforts to better assist you!

Want to share what you've learned at the conference with the world?  
We'd love that, and we'd love it if you'd tagged us in it on social media, too!

**@broadleafwriters | #BWCS**

## 2023 Conference Schedule: Birds-Eye View

8th Annual Broadleaf Writers Conference						
Schedule						
Saturday (9/23)		ROOM A	MODERATOR	ROOM B	MODERATOR	ROOM C
TIME						1-on-1 Sessions
9:00-9:30		<i>Welcome and Intro</i>				
9:30-10:30		<i>Hammer &amp; Nails</i>	Bill Bridges	<i>Devil in the Details</i>	Benji Carr	
10:30-10:45						
10:45-11:45		<i>Flesh &amp; Bones</i>	Jessica Bowers	<i>Workshop: Eliot Parker</i>		<i>Pitch Sessions #1</i>
11:45-12:00						
12:00-1:00		<i>Stir the Pot</i>	Eliot Parker	<i>Singing on Key</i>	Ann Hite	
1:00-2:15		<i>LUNCH</i>				
2:15-3:15		<i>It's All a Matter of Perspective</i>	Crystal O'Leary-Davidson	<i>Taking it In</i>	Benji Carr	<i>Pitch Sessions #2</i>
3:15-3:30						
3:30-4:45		<i>First Pages Critique</i>	Carmen Slaughter			
5:00-7:00						
Sunday (9/24)		ROOM A	MODERATOR	ROOM B	MODERATOR	ROOM C
TIME						1-on-1 Sessions
9:00-9:15		<i>Welcome Back</i>				
9:15-10:15		<i>Ask the Agent</i>	Carmen Slaughter	<i>Fair &amp; Balanced</i>	Man Martin	
10:15-10:30						
10:30-11:30		<i>The Writer's Toolbox</i>	Man Martin	<i>Workshop: Jeffrey Dale Lofton</i>		<i>Mentoring/Pitch Sessions (through noon)</i>
11:30-11:45						
11:45-12:45		<i>Beyond the Hurt</i>	Jeff Clemmons	<i>Workshop: Jessica Bowers</i>		
12:45-2:00		<i>LUNCH</i>				
2:00-3:00		<i>Remember Me</i>	Robert Gwaltney			
3:00-3:15						
3:15-4:30		<i>Wear the Right Shoes</i>	Crystal O'Leary-Davidson			
4:30-4:45		<i>Farewell</i>				



# 8th Annual Broadleaf Writers Conference

September 23-24,  
2023

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## A Note from Broadleaf Executive Director, Zachary Steele

We're back at the Decatur Library, where it all began! It's been a bit of a ride over the past three years and we're beyond excited to be back in person with each and every one of you. And we're equally excited for you!

A conference experience can be such a tremendous opportunity for a writer. Between gaining from the knowledge and experience of speakers, to meeting and connecting with writers who know and share in your struggle and passion, this is your chance to be a part of a writing community working toward a common goal: to help turn manuscripts into published books!

So be active today! Say hello, ask others what they're working on, talk about your writing journey, chat with our speakers. Use some of the quiet space available to chat. Not only are you amongst your peers as a writer, you're here with writers who want to publish and discuss the writing journey!

Have some fun. Be inspired. Learn as much as you can. Then get home and get to work! This is *your* time. We're glad you've chosen to spend it with us, and we're eager to help you in any way that we can.

The Broadleaf Writers Association stands firm in its commitment to assisting and guiding writers through the process of improving and refining their craft. Through our annual conference, periodic seminars and workshops, and the opportunity to network with other writers throughout the year, we hope to offer every writer an organization with an open door to community, education, and inspiration.

We're here to help you become the best writer you can be.

To learn more about Broadleaf Writers and all the programming we offer throughout the year, please visit us at [www.broadleafwriters.com](http://www.broadleafwriters.com).



# Schedule: Deep-Dive

## Saturday, September 23, 2023

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9:00 – 9:10 a.m. ET



### Introduction

Main Stage

**Presenter:** Maryann Lozano  
President, Broadleaf Board of Director & Conference Chair

9:10 – 9:25 a.m. ET



### Welcome

Main Stage

**Presenter:** Zachary Steele  
Broadleaf Writers Founder & Executive Director

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. ET



### Hammer & Nails: Building a World From the Ground Up

Main Stage

**Panelists:** Jenn Lyons, Andy Davidson, Clay McLeod Chapman  
**Moderator:** Bill Bridges

Worldbuilding is the meticulous construction of the stage upon which your characters live and develop, and is an important element of story structure within all genres. A believable world must be governed by rules and laws, rich in language, culture, and history. Join our panelists for a discussion on how they craft their worlds.



### Devil in the Details: Researching for Authenticity

Room B

**Panelists:** Beverly J. Armento, Jeff Clemmons, Vanessa Riley  
**Moderator:** Benji Carr

Whether you are writing fiction or nonfiction, every author must engage in research. You must have good information to make your story authentic and respectful of the place and people who inhabit

it. Regardless of the genre, you must write in a way that is true, pulling away any obstacles to the suspension of disbelief. Join our panelists for a discussion on how they navigate their way through research and writing using different tools and approaches.

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10:45 – 11:45 a.m. ET

## **Flesh & Bones: Creating Characters With Depth**

Main Stage



**Panelists:** Jenn Lyons, Anissa Gray, Jeffrey Dale Lofton

**Moderator:** Jessica Bowers



Creating characters with the same emotional depth and complexity as real-life people (backstories, flaws, and world views) is essential in storytelling. The pattern of thoughts, actions, and beliefs that form a human being should also mold your characters. Join our panelists for insights into how they flesh out the people who inhabit their compelling stories.

## **Workshop: How to Create a Compelling Villain that Readers will Love to Hate**

Room B

**Presenter:** Eliot Parker



In mystery and thriller writing, the protagonist (a detective, private investigator, federal agent, average citizen, etc.) is often pitted against an antagonist whose motives are heinous. The reader follows the narrative with great interest, waiting for the moment when the protagonist and the antagonist will have their final confrontation.

The antagonist must be an interesting, flawed character who experiences “raised stakes” on their way to solving the mystery, while also being equally complex, with flaws and motivations in direct opposition to those of the protagonist.

How can that same attention be given to creating a complex villain that readers are going to “love to hate?” This workshop examines strategies and techniques that mystery/thriller writers can use to create a complex, interesting, and passionate villain that will be worthy of challenging the protagonist physically and/or emotionally. Attendees should expect a short writing exercise at the

beginning and at the end of the workshop.

## **One-on-One Sessions: Pitch Sessions**

Room C

Sign up for a ten-minute one-on-one session with a literary agent. This is a great opportunity to discuss your manuscript with an agent, get invaluable feedback, and hopefully get the opportunity to send more material for potential representation!

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12:00 – 1:00 p.m. ET

### **Stir the Pot: Stoking the Fire of Conflict**

Main Stage

**Panelists:** Jon Holman, Andy Davidson, Anissa Gray

**Moderator:** Eliot Parker



An essential element of storytelling is conflict. Conflict is the critical element that kick-starts and gives the story a purpose. Without it, the story withers and so do readers. Whether it is character against self, character against character, or character against society, there must be obstacles. Learn tips to craft high stakes conflict, keep the story moving, and readers turning pages.



### **Singing on Key: Writing with an Authentic Voice**

Room B

**Panelists:** Veena Rao, Lynn Cullen, Jeffrey Dale Lofton

**Moderator:** Ann Hite

In the evershifting world of publishing, a constant remains: the quest for authentic voices. But who possesses the right to tell a story, and how can a storyteller ethically and with sensitivity delve into a community other than their own? Join our panelists for a discussion on forging an authentic voice, affecting change, and connecting communities through story.

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1:00 – 2:15 p.m. ET **Lunch**

It's time for a break! But you don't have to go alone. Grab some food (provided!) and enjoy your meal with our speakers or fellow attendees. Make friends, find mentors, form writing groups, and embrace the power and importance of a writing community!

**Don't forget to [fill out your post-conference survey!](#)**

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2:15 – 3:15 p.m. ET

### **It's All a Matter of Perspective: Choosing the Right POV for Your Story**

Main Stage



**Panelists:** Jon Holman, Lynn Cullen, Clay McLeod Chapman

**Moderator:** Crystal O'Leary-Davidson



First-person, third-person omniscient, third-person limited, and so on. The point of view you use for your story can determine how much the reader knows and when they should know it. But how do you decide which to use? Our panelists are ready to offer tips on how to select the right one!

### **Taking it In: Using Feedback to Strengthen Your Story**

Room B



**Panelists:** Beverly J. Armento, Jeff Clemmons, Vanessa Riley

**Moderator:** Benji Carr



From first draft to publication, a book's fate can be determined by the feedback of others. Whether from beta readers, critique groups, agents, editors, or readers, that feedback provides an opportunity to gain insight on what does or does not work in your story.

Learning how to manage expectations and how to apply readers' suggestions to the revisions of future drafts is a skill every writer must learn. Join our panelists as they discuss how to find readers you can trust, how to negotiate suggested edits, and what to do when the feedback isn't everything you hoped it would be.



## One-on-One Sessions: Pitch Sessions

Room C

Sign up for a ten-minute one-on-one session with a literary agent. This is a great opportunity to discuss your manuscript with an agent, get invaluable feedback, and hopefully get the opportunity to send more material for potential representation!

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3:30 –4:45 p.m. ET

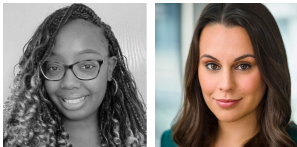
### First Pages Critique

Main Stage



**Panelists:** Michelle Jackson, Erin Clyburn, Nicole Payne, Lauren Spieller

**Moderator:** Carmen Slaughter



The first page is an introduction to your story, and to your writing. To catch the eye of an agent, your first page needs to be on point. Join our literary agents as they listen to and critique your first pages. Which pages will tantalize and intrigue? Gain invaluable insights from their gentle feedback.



We'll see you tomorrow! **Don't forget to [fill out your post-conference survey!](#)**

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# Schedule: Deep-Dive

## Sunday, September 24, 2023

9:00 – 9:15 a.m. ET **Welcome Back**



Main Stage

**Presenter:** Maryann Lozano

President, Broadleaf Board of Director & Conference Chair

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9:15 – 10:15 p.m. ET



**Ask the Agent: An Open Forum**

Main Stage

**Panelists:** Michelle Jackson, Erin Clyburn, Nicole Payne

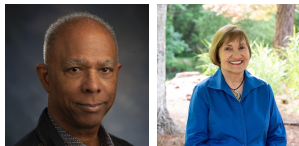
**Moderator:** Carmen Slaughter



From query to the sale of a manuscript, the role of the literary agent in the path of the published author cannot be understated. Yet, much of what they do, or how to get an agent at all, can leave a writer confused and uncertain. You have questions to be answered. Come early, be ready, ask away. Our panel of agents are ready to answer!

**Fair & Balanced: The Unbiased Writer**

Room B



**Panelists:** Jon Holman, Beverly J. Armento, Jeff Clemmons

**Moderator:** Man Martin



When writing about history or politics, authors must write objectively and inclusively to avoid alienating readers. Utilizing proper research and accurate sources is vital. Join our panelists for a discussion on approaching any fiction or nonfiction project with curiosity instead of a pre-set bias, to ensure your story is engaging and informative.

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10:30 – 11:30 a.m. ET



## **The Writer's Toolbox: Keeping it Stocked and Ready**

Main Stage

**Panelists:** Veena Rao, Andy Davidson, Lynn Cullen

**Moderator:** Man Martin

Writing takes time. It takes energy. It takes determination to reach the final page and see The End. But what's the right process? How much, and when, should you write each day? Should you outline or fly by the seat of your pants? Worldbuilding, character sketches, maps, synopsis, and so on. The list seems never-ending. The tools needed to tell a story are plentiful. How does a writer learn to use them and how many should they keep? Bring your toolbox and our panelists will discuss the tools you need to stock and help you build a process that works for you.

## **Workshop: Writing the Fictionalized Memoir**

Room B

**Presenter:** Jeffrey Dale Lofton



Writing a memoir requires precision and accuracy in the details. But how does a writer present the history of events from their lives if they wish to fictionalize the story? Join Jeffrey Dale Lofton for an in-depth look at the six guidelines he used to write *Red Clay Suzie*. In this workshop, Jeffrey will discuss the pros and cons of interviewing individuals who might appear in your story. There *will* be writing exercises, so come prepared!

## **One-on-One Sessions: Mentoring Sessions**

Room C

Sign up for a ten-minute one-on-one session with a literary agent or author. Take this opportunity to ask any question on the industry or writing that you may have in a personal session!

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11:45 – 12:45 p.m. ET

## **Beyond the Hurt: Staying Strong in a World of Rejection**

Main Stage



**Panelists:** Jenn Lyons, Andy Davidson, Clay McLeod Chapman

**Moderator:** Jeff Clemmons



Whether you're submitting stories to literary agents, bringing your writing to a workshop, or following reviews as they roll in, writers experience criticism and rejection from every corner. Suffice to say, rejection hurts. But if every writer that ever felt the sting of rejection decided to stop writing, the publishing industry would evaporate. Learning how to handle—and even feel good about—rejection can keep a writer motivated and doing what they do best: writing.

## **Workshop: Marketing in the Social Media Age**

Room B

**Presenter:** Jessica Bowers, Broadleaf Director of Marketing & Promotion



Becoming a successful author these days means more than writing a great book. You also have to be able to build a brand and market yourself and your stories. Jessica will leverage 13 years of marketing experience to be sure you're getting the most out of your efforts. We'll also be creating unique content you can use, so bring your phone and make sure it's fully charged.

## **One-on-One Sessions: Pitch and Mentoring Sessions**

Room C

Sign up for a ten-minute one-on-one session with a literary agent or author. Take this opportunity to ask any question on the industry or writing that you may have in a personal session!

12:45 – 2:00 p.m. ET **Lunch**

It's time for a break! But you don't have to go alone. Grab some food (provided!) and enjoy your meal with our speakers or fellow attendees. Make friends, find mentors, form writing groups, and embrace the power and importance of a writing community!

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2:00 – 3:00 p.m. ET



### **Remember Me: How to Build a Literary Brand that Lasts**

Room A

**Panelists:** Jeffrey Dale Lofton, Clay McLeod Chapman

**Moderator:** Robert Gwaltney



Writers often have bodies of published and/or unpublished work, but many times wonder how they can build a literary life that has sustained momentum. In this panel, learn how to build a writing career that employs consistency, persistence, and creativity, while remaining marketable in a crowded marketplace.

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3:15 – 4:30 p.m. ET



### **Wear the Right Shoes: The Many Paths to Publication**

Main Stage

**Panelists:** Veena Rao, Jeffrey Dale Lofton, Beverly J. Armento

**Moderator:** Crystal O'Leary-Davidson



Publishing can be brutal. The good news is that there are multiple publishing options available for authors today: traditional, independent, hybrid, and self-publishing. Each path is paved with different considerations. Which one is right for you? Before you set down a particular path, it is important to know which shoes to wear. Join our panelists for a discussion on their publication journeys and all they learned along the way.

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4:30 p.m. ET



## **Farewell**

Main Stage

**Presenter:** Zachary Steele

Broadleaf Writers Founder & Executive Director

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and it assists in our efforts to better assist you!

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### **A Very Special Thank You to Our Panel Moderators!**

Our conference would be nothing without the moderators who lead the conversations. Each year, our moderators excel in drawing the most out of every topic, fielding your questions, and ensuring every speaker has their say. Though it may seem organic, these dedicated folks spend hours prior to the conference working with the speakers, writing up questions, and coordinating a conversation that best benefits our attendees. They deserve high praise for their work, and we greatly appreciate all they do!

- **Jessica Bowers**
- **Bill Bridges**
- **Benji Carr**
- **Jeff Clemmons**
- **Crystal O'Leary-Davidson**
- **Robert Gwaltney**
- **Ann Hite**
- **Man Martin**
- **Eliot Parker**
- **Carmen Slaughter**

## Guest Speakers

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**Beverly J. Armento**



Inspired by the many teachers who mentored her, **Beverly J. Armento** became an educator and enjoyed a multi-decade career, working with middle-school children as well as with prospective teachers. Retired now, she is Professor Emerita at Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia, and holds degrees from The William Paterson University, New Jersey; Purdue University, Indiana; and Indiana University. She currently lives in Atlanta, Georgia where she enjoys staying in touch with her “old” students and many friends, reading, writing, and gardening. Beverly’s debut memoir, *Seeing Eye Girl*, was awarded as the Most Moving Book for 2023.

**Clay McLeod Chapman**



**Clay McLeod Chapman** is the author of novels *Ghost Eaters*, *Whisper Down the Lane*, *The Remaking*, and *miss corpus*, story collections *nothing untoward*, *commencement* and *rest area*, as well as *The Tribe* middlegrade series: *Homeroom*, *Headhunters*, *Camp Cannibal* and *Academic Assassins*.

His new novel, *What Kind of Mother*, was released on September 12, 2023.

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**Jeff Clemmons**

**Jeff Clemmons** has a degree in business administration from Reinhardt University and a degree in creative writing and theater from Georgia State University. He created and conducts walking tours for the Atlanta Preservation Center, serves on the board of the East Point Historical Society, and is a cofounder of Marthasville, an Atlanta-based writing salon. In addition to writing two books – *Rich’s: A Southern Institution* and *Atlanta’s Historic Westview Cemetery* – and a screenplay, Jeff, along with three others, was nominated for an Emmy Award for producing Georgia Public Television’s “Rich’s Remembered.” He is currently at work on his third book, a biography of forgotten Atlanta avant-garde novelist Frances Newman, who gained national attention alongside Hemingway and others in the 1920s.

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**Lynn Cullen**

**Lynn Cullen** is the bestselling author of the historical novels *The Woman With the Cure*, *The Sisters of Summit Avenue*, *Twain’s End*, *Mrs. Poe*, *Reign of Madness*, and *I Am Rembrandt’s Daughter*. To read about Lynn’s introduction to writing historical fiction, [click here](#).

Her novel, *Mrs. Poe*, was named a Book of the Week by *People Magazine*, a Target Book Club Pick, an NPR 2013 Great Read, an Indie Next List selection. It was also a book of the month at Costco, an Oprah Book of the Week, and *Atlanta* magazine named it one of the Best Books of 2013. She now lives in Atlanta with her husband, their dog, and two unscrupulous cats.



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**Andy Davidson**



**Andy Davidson** is the Bram Stoker Award nominated author of *In the Valley of the Sun*, *The Boatman's Daughter*, and *The Hollow Kind*. He holds an MFA from the University of Mississippi. Born and raised in Arkansas, he makes his home in Georgia with his wife, Crystal, and a bunch of cats.

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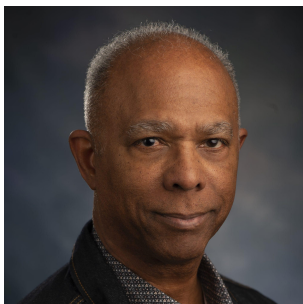
**Anissa Gray**



**Anissa Gray** was born and raised in western Michigan. She is the author of the critically acclaimed 2019 novel *The Care and Feeding of Ravenously Hungry Girls*. Gray is also a journalist whose work has been featured in *The Washington Post*, *CNN*, *The Cut* and *Shondaland*. She lives in Atlanta, Georgia with her wife.

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**John Holman**



**John Holman** is the author of a short story collection, *Squabble and Other Stories*, and a novel, *Luminous Mysteries*. His stories also have appeared in such publications as *The New Yorker*, *Mississippi Review*, *Crescent Review*, *Apalachee Quarterly*, *Carolina Quarterly*, *Oxford American*, and *Alabama Literary Review*. His work has also appeared in various anthologies. He also has written on issues related to the teaching of creative writing.

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**Jeffrey Dale Lofton**

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**Jeffrey Dale Lofton** hails from Warm Springs, Georgia, best known as the home of Roosevelt's Little White House. He calls the nation's capital home now and has for over three decades. During those early years of living in Washington DC, he spent many a night trodding the boards of DC's theaters and performing arts centers, including the Kennedy Center, Signature Theatre, Woolly Mammoth, and Studio Theatre.

*Red Clay Suzie* is his first novel, a fictionalized memoir written through his personal lens growing up a gay, physically misshapen outsider in a conservative family and community in the Deep South. You can learn more about Jeffrey at <https://jeffreydlofton.com/>.

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**Jenn Lyons**

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**Jenn Lyons** lives in Atlanta, Georgia, with her husband, three cats and a nearly infinite number of opinions on anything from Sumerian mythology to the correct way to make a martini. Lyons traces her geek roots back to playing first edition Dungeons & Dragons in grade school and reading her way from A to Z in the school's library. Formerly an art director and video game producer, she now spends her days writing fantasy. In 2020, she was nominated for the Astounding Award for Best New Writer. Her five-book Chorus of Dragons fantasy series begins with *The Ruin of Kings*.

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**Vanessa Riley**

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**Vanessa Riley** is an award-winning author of *Island Queen*, A Good Morning America Buzz Pick and the forthcoming *Queen of Exiles*. Riley's historical novels showcase the hidden histories of Black women and women of color, emphasizing strong sisterhoods and dazzling multicultural communities. Her works encompass historical fiction, historical romance, and historical mystery and have been reviewed by the Washington Post, Entertainment Weekly, NPR, Publisher Weekly, and the New York Times.

Vanessa is a member and former president of Regency Fiction Writers, a member of Georgia Writers Association, the Historical Novel Society, Crime Writers of Color, and on the Board of Directors of Christian Book Lovers Retreat. She's an avid baker who loves creating her Trinidadian grandma's cake recipes. You can find Vanessa writing on her southern porch with proper amounts of caffeine.

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**Veena Rao**

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**Veena Rao** is an award-winning Indian-American author and journalist. She is the founder, publisher, and editor-in-chief of *NRI Pulse*, an Atlanta-based newspaper that serves the South Asian communities of the US. She has been recognized by The Limca Book of Records (the Indian version of the Guinness Book of Records) as the first Indian woman to edit and publish a newspaper outside India.

*Purple Lotus*, her debut novel, is a 2021 American Fiction Award winner, a 2021 Georgia Author of the Year finalist, and an award-winning finalist in the multicultural and women's fiction categories of the

2021 International Book Awards.

Veena is devoted to advocating for victims of domestic and sexual abuse as a board member of Saris to Suits, an Atlanta-based non-profit. She is also passionate about promoting South Asian literary voices in the US through her news publication and as a program coordinator for the Tasveer South Asian Film and Literary Festival.

## Featured Literary Agents

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**Michelle Jackson**  
LCS Literary



**Michelle Jackson** represents books that evoke heartfelt emotions and fervent conversations among readers. Her mission is to mentor and develop authors, particularly those from underrepresented communities, and help them build a brand of quality and authentic reads.

Originally from Jamaica, West Indies, Michelle is now a literary agent with [LCS Literary](#). She began her agenting career as an intern and then a Literary Associate with Olswanger Literary. She is also a published author and has earned educational degrees from New York University, SUNY at StonyBrook, Teachers College Columbia University and Argosy University. Michelle looks forward to bringing adult fiction and select young adult and non-fiction works of new authors to the masses, especially BIPOC and

underrepresented authors. She is also a content editor and loves developing and working with new authors to help them hone their craft. She is looking for stories with strong character arcs and hooks. Intriguing plot lines that keep her up at night until she gets to the last page. Romances that make her heart swoon, thrillers that keep her guessing and heartwarming, uplifting tales. Stories about sister friends, mother-daughter relationships. Stories with themes of friendship, forgiveness, love and second chances. Michelle has a soft spot for fellow educators who are writers and for stories featuring educators. She is also looking for those who want to write category romances—she also loves Amish romances!

Adult Fiction: Commercial, Historical, Humor, New Adult, Romance, Science Fiction, Fantasy, Thriller, Women's Fiction

Sub-genres: Contemporary Romance, Multicultural, Psychological Thrillers, Romantic Comedy, Romantic Suspense

Young Adult Fiction: Contemporary, Historical, Christian, Romance

Nonfiction: Biography, True Crime, Self-Help, Relationships, Cookbooks, Narrative, Spirituality, select Memoirs.

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**Lauren Spieller**  
Folio Literary Management



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**Lauren Spieller** is a literary agent with [Folio Literary Management](#). She represents an exciting and talented list of award winning and bestselling authors. Whatever the age category or genre, Lauren is passionate about representing diverse and underrepresented voices, and she's always on the hunt for a new point of view.

Lauren considers herself an editorial agent and provides support and insight at all stages of a book's creation, tailoring the way she works to the client's needs. She is also a fierce advocate and negotiator.

In addition to her life as an agent, Lauren is also the author of two Young Adult novels: *Your Destination is on the Left* and *She's the Worst*.

#### WHAT LAUREN IS LOOKING FOR

"I love books that sit at the intersection of 'commercial' and 'timeless,' especially if they pair a big hook with voicey, upmarket writing. I like to read books that keep me at the edge of my seat, that make me laugh out loud, that make me swoon, or that are simply so unputdownable that I stay up way too late reading. I also love smart genre-bending tales, books that tackle a familiar topic or time period from a new or surprising perspective, and stories that take big risks, whatever that means to you.

But let's get more specific. In MG, I'm looking for high concept contemporaries, magical fantasy and kid-friendly sci-fi, exciting historical, and spooky

horror/mystery. I'd also love to see MG graphic novels, especially if it's set in our world. In YA, I'm drawn to speculative stories (fantasy, sci-fi, and horror), contemporary novels with a big hook, romance and RomCom, suspense/thrillers, and graphic novels.

In Adult, I'm seeking female-driven suspense/thrillers, immersive and upmarket/literary SFF and horror, hilarious RomComs and swoony upmarket romance, as well as the occasional unique non-fiction with an existing platform.

For a list of (some of) my favorite recent books, check out [manuscriptwishlist.com](http://manuscriptwishlist.com) and my #mswl posts on Twitter.”

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**Erin Clyburn**  
Howland Literary



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Prior to joining [Howland Literary](https://www.howlandliterary.com) in 2022, **Erin Clyburn** was an associate agent with The Jennifer De Chiara Literary Agency. She was the general manager and director of collection development for Turtleback Books, a distributor of books to the school and library market, and she has over a decade of experience in magazine publishing, having worked for brands including *Food & Wine*, *Cooking Light*, *People*, and *Entertainment Weekly*. She received her BA in English Literature from Mississippi State University and her MA in Children's Literature from Hollins University. She lives in Birmingham, Alabama, with her partner, Michael, and three unruly rabbits.

Erin represents middle grade fiction, YA fiction, and adult fiction and nonfiction.

In **middle grade**, Erin is looking for horror, mystery, grounded stories with a speculative element, magical realism/fabulism, big-hearted contemporary, & adventure stories.

In **YA fiction**, she is looking for horror, mystery, thriller, grounded stories with a speculative element, magical realism/fabulism, Southern gothic, and rom-coms (heavy on the com).

In **adult fiction**, she is looking for literary and upmarket projects in speculative fiction, horror, mystery, psychological thrillers, domestic thrillers, magical realism/fabulism, Southern gothic, and rom-coms. She is also looking for commercial psychological and domestic thrillers in the vein of Ruth Ware and Lisa Jewell.

In **adult nonfiction**, she's interested in intersectional perspectives and is looking for deeply researched narrative nonfiction and deep dives into topics including medicine, pop science, nature/environment, food and culinary history, and pop culture, specifically video games, music, and film/TV.

An Alabamian with Louisiana roots, Erin is particularly interested in Southern literary and upmarket fiction from diverse voices in the above genres. Across the board, she gravitates toward lyrical writing and to works that are strange and genre-bendy.



*Send her your weirds.*

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**Nicole Payne**

Copps Literary Services



Many moons ago, a book-loving nerd was given a chance to live out her childhood dream of being a literary agent. Starting from reader to intern, **Nicole Payne** ultimately became an agent in the summer of 2016. Now she embarks on a new journey, joining Copps Literary Services in 2023.

**What Nicole is looking for:** Stories that have amazing voice, killer plot, magical words, and a uniqueness that can't be matched. She focuses on young adult and adult fiction novels that specialize in romance, women's fiction, literary fiction, mystery, suspense, thriller and speculative fiction. She also hopes to receive more diverse voices and stories.

As she slowly delves into the nonfiction waters, Nicole would love to see more science-based books, especially in biology and forensics, as well as medicine, travel, and cookbooks.

**Nicole is NOT seeking:** early readers, middle grade, political novels, or erotica.

- For specifics, view Nicole's latest Manuscript Wish List [here](#).
- Before submitting to Nicole, be sure to review the CLS submission guidelines [here](#).
- Connect with Nicole on [Twitter](#).

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## Broadleaf Writers Association Code of Conduct

### Overview

Broadleaf Writers Association envisions a community enriched by the literary arts. This community aims to be welcoming, inclusive, respectful, and safe for all. To that end, Broadleaf Writers has adopted the following Code of Conduct and terms and conditions.

All Broadleaf Writers Association (“BWA”) program participants are subject to and must abide by the BWA Code of Conduct. By registering for or attending a Broadleaf Writers Association (“BWA”) program, participants acknowledge and agree they have read and understood the Code of Conduct. Any person, guest, student, media representative, speaker, or exhibitor who is present at a BWA program is considered a participant.

BWA encourages participant discussion and engagement during its programs, and on its social media channels and online platforms because we believe diversity of opinion and thought is critical to creative engagement. When engaging with one another, participants are expected to act in a civil and collegial manner at all times. BWA will not tolerate harassment or intimidation of its participants or anyone connected to any program sponsored by BWA, regardless of format or forum. Examples of impermissible behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Offensive or abusive physical contact;
- Repeated or persistent unwanted physical contact;
- Use of slurs or offensive nicknames or terms of endearment;
- Unwelcome comments about a person’s clothing, body, or personal life; or
- Offensive jokes or unwelcome innuendo.

Participants who engage in inappropriate conduct may be removed from BWA programs, whether online or in-person, or from BWA social media channels or interactive platforms without further warning. The decision to remove a participant from some or all of BWA’s programs, channels, or platforms shall be made in BWA’s sole discretion. Participants removed from a paid program because they are in violation of the code of conduct will not be eligible for a refund of program or membership costs.

Do not use BWA’s website or BWA’s social media accounts for any unauthorized purpose.

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## **Reporting an Issue**

Participants finding themselves in a situation where they feel their safety or comfort are at risk or who become aware of a participant not in compliance with this code of conduct should contact a BWA staff person or director so that the matter can be resolved. Staff and directors are identifiable by a name badge and ribbon or by a nametag. For virtual events, the program host may be contacted via private message, or the participant may choose to email the BWA Executive Director, Zachary Steele, at zach@broadleafwriters.com. At the annual conference, reports of misconduct may be made at the registration desk, with the conference chairperson, or via email to the Executive Director. Reports can be made at any time. BWA requests that a report be filed as soon as possible, so that concerns can be resolved immediately. Reports will be taken seriously and handled appropriately regardless of when they are made.

Retaliation in response to asking a question, raising a concern in good faith, or participating in an investigation will not be tolerated. Knowingly making a false report or reporting with malice or disregard for the truth is also prohibited and may result in removal from BWA programs, channels, or platforms.

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## **Terms and Conditions**

Participants in violation of rules and/or who behave in an unsafe or careless manner may be asked to leave and will be held responsible for their actions. Participants acknowledge that such violations may result in the attendee being removed from the event or forum and barred from returning without refund of the participant's registration fee. Participants likewise acknowledge and agree that all participants have the right to enjoy BWA programs equally. Disruptive behavior that interferes with the conduct of reasonable business, or any other attendee's safety or comfort, may result in the participant being removed from the event/forum (in-person or virtual) and barred from returning/rejoining without refund of the participant's registration fee.

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## **Indemnity**

To the extent permitted by law, the participant agrees to protect, indemnify, defend, and hold harmless BWA, its directors, Board members, and volunteers against all claims, losses, damages, costs, third party claims, settlements, liabilities and/or the like, including, but not limited to attorneys' fees or other professionals' fees, costs, or expenses, arising from or relating to the actions or failure to act of the BWA, its directors, Board members, or volunteers.

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## **Access Guidelines**

BWA is committed to making all reasonable arrangements that will allow participants to participate in all in-person events. In order to help BWA better prepare, please submit requests for special services, equipment, or accommodations in advance of the event so they can be timely evaluated. Please submit your request to [zach@broadleafwriters.com](mailto:zach@broadleafwriters.com). Participants who require special onsite assistance during events should request it from personnel at the registration desk or the event host.

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## **Lost Registration Badge**

Participant's registration badge must be worn at all times during the annual in-person conference. Access to the conference facilities will not be granted to those without a proper badge. If a participant loses, misplaces, or forgets his or her name badge, a replacement badge can be obtained from the registration desk. A small fee may be required for the creation of a new registration badge. Once the new registration badge is released to the participant, the lost badge will become invalid.

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## **Photography & Filming**

Professional photographs, audio, and video will be captured during the events. Participants hereby grant BWA and its representatives permission to photograph and/or record them at the event, and distribute (both now and in the future) the participant's image and/or voice in photographs, videotapes, electronic reproductions, and sound recordings of such events and activities.

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## **Program Disruption, Modification, or Cancellation and BWA Refund Policy**

While BWA will make every effort to present its programs as described, sometimes unforeseen circumstances arise which require modification or cancellation of its programming. BWA reserves the right to modify or cancel its programming, including, but not limited to, the substitution of speakers, panelists, or topics; rescheduling the day or time of its programming; or relocating an event to another physical address or to an online forum.

In the event programming cannot be held or is postponed due to events beyond BWA's control, BWA shall not be liable to participant for any damages, costs, or losses incurred, such as transportation costs, accommodations costs, or financial losses.

Paid participants may request a refund for any event (refund terms defined within event descriptions). Otherwise, BWA will only offer refunds in the event that a paid program is canceled, relocated to a physical location more than 10 miles from the original programming site, or relocated from an in-person to online forum. Paid participants who are

unable to attend in-person or online events due to last minute personal considerations or internet disruption will not be eligible for a refund.  
Thank you for making BWA a safe, enriching, inspiring community.