

September–November Program Calendar – American Writers Museum

September

1 Reading/Signing:

Laura Walls: Henry David Thoreau: A Life

Drawing on Thoreau's copious writings, published and unpublished, Walls presents a Thoreau vigorously alive in all his quirks and contradictions: the young man shattered by the sudden death of his brother; the ambitious Harvard College student; the ecstatic visionary who closed Walden with an account of the regenerative power of the Cosmos. We meet the man whose belief in human freedom and the value of labor made him an uncompromising abolitionist; the solitary walker who found society in nature, but also found his own nature in the society of which he was a deeply interwoven part. And, running through it all, Thoreau the passionate naturalist, who, long before the age of environmentalism, saw tragedy for future generations in the human heedlessness around him. *5pm Readers Hall. General public. Free with museum admission or \$5 donation for the event.*

5 Tuesday First Books:

Augustus Rose: The Readymade Thief

The American Writers Museum celebrates the past, promotes the present and inspires the future of writing in the United States. We are proud to welcome these authors to our new monthly Tuesday First Books series, which highlights the first books of promising emerging and established writers.

Lee Cuddy is seventeen years old and on the run. Betrayed by her family after taking the fall for a friend, Lee finds refuge in a cooperative of runaways holed up in an abandoned building they call the Crystal Castle. But the façade of the Castle conceals a far more sinister agenda, one hatched by a society of fanatical men set on decoding a series of powerful secrets hidden in plain sight. And they believe Lee holds the key to it all.

A novel of puzzles, conspiracies, secret societies, urban exploration, art history, and a singular, indomitable heroine, *The Readymade Thief* heralds the arrival of a spellbinding and original new talent in fiction. *Copies of the book will be sold at AWM before and after the reading. 5pm Readers Hall. General Public. Free with museum admission or \$5 suggested donation for event.*

7 Surprise Bookshelf Series: Elise Paschen: *The Nightlife*

American writing's diversity of form is one of its greatest strengths. This series celebrates journalism, poetry, history, biography, graphic novels/cartoons and all forms of American writing.

In Elise Paschen's prize-winning poetry collection, *Infidelities*, Richard Wilbur wrote that the poems ". . . draw upon a dream life which can deeply tincture the waking world." In her third poetry book, *The Nightlife*, Paschen once again taps into dream states, creating a narrative which balances between the lived and the imagined life. Probing the tension between "The Elevated" and the "Falls," she explores troubled love and relationships, the danger of accident and emotional volatility.

The Nightlife demonstrates Paschen's versatility and formal mastery as she experiments with forms such as the pantoum, the villanelle and the tritina, as well as concrete poems and poems in free verse. Throughout this poetry collection, she interweaves lyric and narrative threads, creating a contrapuntal story-line. The book begins with a dive into deep water and ends with an opening into sky. *Books will be sold at AWM before and after the event. 5pm Readers Hall. General Public. Free with museum admission or \$5 donation for event.*

12 Children's Author Storytime: On the second Tuesday of each month at 10:30am, AWM welcomes a new children's author in its children's gallery. Meet your favorite book's creators and illustrators, get your book signed and hear a story from some of the most inspiring and creative children's authors' writing today. *Presented in partnership with the Society of Children's Book Authors and Illustrators.*

September 12: Ruth Spiro, author of the *Baby Loves Science* series and *Lester Fizz, Bubble-gum Artist*.

12 University of Chicago Writer's Studio Class: *Resistance Writing*

Throughout history, people have responded to war, oppression, and personal demons with literature. There are the shouts of Allen Ginsburg, Amiri Bakara, Muriel Rukeyser, the whispers of Paul Celan, and the musing of countless others. The very act of writing is a protest against silence, against oppression, against corruption, against the status quo. We will discuss poets and writers who have used their voices, music, metaphor, and imaginations to resist different forms of oppression. Using them as inspiration, we will write our own resistance literature.

This six-week class takes place at the American Writers Museum on Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm. Register at the Graham School Writer's Studio here: www.grahamschool.uchicago.edu/liberal-arts/open-enrollment/writers-studio/index or call 773.702.1722 to sign up.

13 Surprise Bookshelf Series: Joyce Maynard: *The Best of Us*

American writing's diversity of form is one of its greatest strengths. This series celebrates journalism, poetry, history, biography, graphic novels/cartoons and all forms of American writing.

From *New York Times* bestselling author Joyce Maynard, a memoir about discovering strength in the midst of great loss—"heart wrenching, inspiring, full of joy and tears and life." (Anne Lamott)

In 2011, when she was in her late fifties, beloved author and journalist Joyce Maynard met the first true partner she had ever known. Then, just after their one-year wedding anniversary, her new husband was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. During the nineteen months they battled his illness together, she discovered for the first time what it really meant to be a couple—to be a true partner and to have one.

This is their story. Charting the course through their whirlwind romance, a marriage cut short by tragedy, and Joyce's return to singleness on new terms, *The Best of Us* is a heart-wrenching, ultimately life-affirming reflection on coming to understand true love through the experience of great loss. *Books will be sold at AWM before and after the event.*

5pm Readers Hall. General Public. Free with museum admission or \$5 donation for event.

14 Surprise Bookshelf Series: Douglas A. Wissing: *Hopeless But Optimistic*

American writing's diversity of form is one of its greatest strengths. This series celebrates journalism, poetry, history, biography, graphic novels/cartoons and all forms of American writing.

Hopeless But Optimistic, award-winning journalist Douglas A. Wissing's poignant and eye-opening journey across insurgency-racked Afghanistan, casts an unyielding spotlight on greed, dysfunction, and predictable disaster while celebrating the everyday courage and wisdom of frontline soldiers, idealistic humanitarians, and resilient Afghans. As Wissing hauls a hundred pounds of body armor and pack across the Afghan warzone in search of the ground truth, US officials frantically spin a spurious victory narrative, American soldiers try to keep their body parts together, and Afghans try to stay positive and strain to figure out their next move after the US eventually leaves. As one technocrat confided to Wissing, "I am hopeless—but optimistic." *Books will be sold at AWM before and after the event. 5pm Readers Hall. General Public. Free with museum admission or \$5 donation for event.*

16 Special Event with Marta McDowell, author of *The World of Laura Ingalls Wilder*

Laura Ingalls Wilder's beloved *Little House* series is a classic coming-of-age story based on Wilder's own family and the pioneer spirit of the time. Deeply rooted in the natural world, Wilder describes the plants, animals, and landscapes in such detail, they are practically their own characters. *The World of Laura Ingalls Wilder*, by *New York Times* bestselling author Marta McDowell, explores Wilder's deep relationship with the landscape. Follow the Wilder's wagon trail starting in the Wisconsin setting of *Little House in the Big Woods*, through the Dakotas, and finally to Missouri. You'll learn details about Wilder's life and inspirations, discover how to visit the real places today, and even learn to grow the plants and vegetables featured in the series. *The World of Laura Ingalls Wilder* is a must-have treasure celebrating the American landscape through Laura Ingalls Wilder's beautiful and wild life with original illustrations by Helen Sewell and Garth Williams and lush historical and contemporary photographs. *6pm Readers Hall, free with membership or museum admission, or \$5 suggested donation at the door.*

21 Surprise Bookshelf Series: Nancy Cavanaugh: *Elsie Mae Has Something to Say*

American writing's diversity of form is one of its greatest strengths. This series celebrates journalism, poetry, history, biography, graphic novels/cartoons and all forms of American writing.

Elsie Mae is pretty sure this'll be the best summer ever. She gets to explore the cool, quiet waters of the Okefenokee Swamp around her grandparents' house with her new dog, Huck, and she's written a letter to President Roosevelt that she's confident will save the swamp from a shipping company and make her a major hometown hero. Then, news reaches Elsie Mae of some hog bandits stealing from swamper families, and she sees another opportunity to make her family proud while waiting to hear back from the White House. But when her cousin Henry James, who dreams of one day becoming a traveling preacher like his daddy, shows up and just about ruins her investigation with his "Hallelujahs," Elsie Mae will learn the hard way what it really means to be a hero.

For ages 8-12. Nancy J. Cavanaugh has a BS in education and an MA in curriculum and instruction with multiple published works. She was a teacher for more than fifteen years and currently works as a Library Media Specialist at an elementary school. Nancy lives in Tarpon Springs, FL with her husband and daughter. Visit www.nancyjcavanaugh.com. AWM will have copies of the book for sale before and after the event. Readers Hall, 5pm, general public. \$5 suggested donation or free with museum admission.

Complete listings for all of our programs
can be found at americanwritersmuseum.org.

Programs subject to change without notice.

continued other side



September—November Program Calendar

from other side

9/27 Gwendolyn Brooks Open Mic Awards with the Guild Literary Complex

Join The Guild Complex with special guest Nora Brooks Blakely as 20 Chicagoland Poets go head-to-head for bragging rights and a chance to win \$500! Audience votes make the decision in this ranging competition. This annual event is always a crowd pleaser with past winners including the esteemed poets Sename Amagashie, Lucy Anderton, Tara Betts, C.C. Carter, Stephanie Gentry-Fernandez, Marian Hayes, Tricia Hersey, Tyehimba Jess, and many others. 7:30-9:30pm \$8 at the door. For more information see the Guild Complex at: guildcomplex.org/gboma

October

5 Surprise Bookshelf Series: Marie Benedict: *The Other Einstein*

American writing's diversity of form is one of its greatest strengths. This series celebrates journalism, poetry, history, biography, graphic novels/cartoons and all forms of American writing.

Author Marie Benedict reads and signs. In the tradition of *The Paris Wife* and *Mrs. Poe*, *The Other Einstein* offers us a window into a brilliant, fascinating woman whose light was lost in Einstein's enormous shadow. It is the story of Einstein's wife, a brilliant physicist in her own right, whose contribution to the special theory of relativity is hotly debated and may have been inspired by her own profound and very personal insight. 5pm Readers Hall. General public. Free with museum admission or \$5 suggested donation for event. Books will be sold at AWM before and after the event.

10 Children's Author Storytime: On the second Tuesday of each month at 10:30am, AWM welcomes a new children's author in its children's gallery. Meet your favorite book's creators and illustrators, get your book signed and hear a story from some of the most inspiring and creative children's authors' writing today. Presented in partnership with the Society of Children's Book Authors and Illustrators.

October 10th: Author TBD.

10 Special Event: Roz Chast at the Chicago Public Library

AWM and the Chicago Public Library are pleased to present New Yorker cartoonist Roz Chast. Chast is the author of the award-winning and #1 New York Times bestselling graphic memoir, *Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?* (2014), and her new graphic book *Going Into Town: A Love Letter to New York* (October 3), is a hilarious illustrated ode/guide/thank-you note to Manhattan.

6pm, Chicago Public Library Cindy Pritzker Auditorium. Information at: chipublib.bibliocommons.com/events

24 Tuesday First Books: Brit Bennett: *The Mothers*

The American Writers Museum celebrates the past, promotes the present and inspires the future of writing in the United States. We are proud to welcome these authors to our new monthly Tuesday First Books series, which highlights the first books of promising emerging and established writers.

Set within a contemporary black community in Southern California, Brit Bennett's mesmerizing first novel is an emotionally perceptive story about community, love, and ambition. It begins with a secret. "All good secrets have a taste before you tell them, and if we'd taken a moment to swish this one around our mouths, we might have noticed the sourness of an unripe secret, plucked too soon, stolen and passed around before its season." Books will be sold at AWM before and after the event. 5pm Readers Hall. General Public. Free with museum admission or \$5 donation for event.

26 Surprise Bookshelf Series: Daren Wang: *The Hidden Light of Northern Fires*

American writing's diversity of form is one of its greatest strengths. This series celebrates journalism, poetry, history, biography, graphic novels/cartoons and all forms of American writing.

The first book from Daren Wang, longtime organizer of the Decatur Book Festival is based on an amazing true story of the Civil War. Rooted in the history of the only secessionist town north of the Mason Dixon Line, *The Hidden Light of Northern Fires* tells a story of redemption amidst a war that tore families and the country apart. 5:30pm Readers Hall. General Public. Free with museum admission or \$5 donation for the event.

November

7 Tuesday First Books: Alexis Okeowo: *A Moonless, Starless Sky*

The American Writers Museum celebrates the past, promotes the present and inspires the future of writing in the United States. We are proud to welcome these authors to our new monthly Tuesday First Books series, which highlights the first books of promising emerging and established writers.

In her debut book, acclaimed journalist and *New Yorker* staff writer Alexis Okeowo offers a powerful, timeless, and masterful work that explores Africa's clash of fundamentalism and the ordinary women and men who are fighting back. The American daughter of Nigerian immigrants to the U.S., Okeowo spent five years on the ground in Africa—landscapes both beautiful and impoverished. The result is a compelling—often heart-wrenching—and always humane narrative of intertwined stories about how everyday people deal with extraordinary circumstances. 5pm Readers Hall. Free with museum admission or \$5 donation for event. Books will be sold at AWM before and after the event.

9 Surprise Bookshelf Series: James McGrath Morris: *The Ambulance Drivers: Hemingway, Dos Passos, and a Friendship Made and Lost in War*

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After meeting for the first time on the front lines of World War I, two aspiring writers forge an intense twenty-year friendship and write some of America's greatest novels, giving voice to a "lost generation" shaken by war.

James McGrath Morris is the author of four previous books, including the *New York Times* bestseller *Eye on the Struggle: Ethel Payne, The First Lady of the Black Press*, which was awarded the Benjamin Hooks National Book Prize, and the highly acclaimed *Pulitzer: A Life in Politics, Print, and Power*. 5pm Readers Hall. General public. Free with museum admission or \$5 donation for event. Books will be sold at AWM before and after the event.

14 Children's Author Storytime: On the second Tuesday of each month at 10:30am, AWM welcomes a new children's author in its children's gallery. Meet your favorite book's creators and illustrators, get your book signed and hear a story from some of the most inspiring and creative children's authors' writing today. Presented in partnership with the Society of Children's Book Authors and Illustrators.

November 14th: Patricia Toht, author of *Pick a Pine Tree* and *All Aboard the London Bus*.

16 Surprise Bookshelf Series: Liesl Olson: *Chicago Renaissance: Literature and Art in the Midwest Metropolis*

American writing's diversity of form is one of its greatest strengths. This series celebrates journalism, poetry, history, biography, graphic novels/cartoons and all forms of American writing.

This remarkable cultural history celebrates the great Midwestern city of Chicago for its centrality to the modernist movement. Author Liesl Olson traces Chicago's cultural development from the 1893 World's Fair through mid-century, illuminating how Chicago writers revolutionized literary forms during the first half of the twentieth century, a period of sweeping aesthetic transformations all over the world. 5pm Readers Hall. General public. Free with museum admission or \$5 suggested donation to the event. Books will be sold at AWM before and after the event.

30 Surprise Bookshelf Series: Heid Erdrich American writing's diversity of form is one of its greatest strengths. This series celebrates journalism, poetry, history, biography, graphic novels/cartoons and all forms of American writing.

Reading and signing. Heid E. Erdrich is the author of five collections of poetry including the new *Curator of Ephemera at the New Museum for Archaic Media* from Michigan State University Press. Heid grew up in Wahpeton, North Dakota and is Ojibwe enrolled at Turtle Mountain. Her recent non-fiction work is *Original Local: Indigenous Foods, Stories and Recipes*. Heid's writing has won numerous awards as have her collaborative poem films, which you can see on her Vimeo channel. Her virtual gallery is: agencyapophany.com. She teaches in the low-residency MFA Creative Writing program of Augsburg College.

5pm Readers Hall. General public. Free with museum admission or \$5 suggested donation to the event. Books will be sold at AWM before and after the event.



180 N. Michigan Avenue • Chicago, IL 60601
312.374.8790 • americanwritersmuseum.org