



# Authors in the Round

## Friday, October 9

### 2015 Guest Authors:

**Corban Addison** holds degrees in law and engineering from the University of Virginia and California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. After completing a federal clerkship, Addison began his career specializing in corporate law and litigation. He has an abiding interest in international human rights, and is a supporter of numerous causes, including the abolition of modern slavery. He lives with his wife and two children in Virginia. *The Tears of Dark Water: A Novel.*

**Kwame Alexander** is a poet, author of 18 books, and recipient of the 2015 Newbery Medal for his novel, *The Crossover*. The founder of two literacy organizations, Book-in-a-Day and LEAP for Ghana, he regularly travels the world conducting writing/publishing workshops at schools and conferences. Kwame has owned several publishing companies, written for stage and television (TLC's "Hip Hop Harry"), recorded a CD, produced jazz and book festivals, hosted a radio show, worked for the U.S. Government, and taught high school. In 2015, Kwame will serve as the Bank Street College of Education's first writer-in-residence.

**John Baeder**, one of our most important contemporary painters, is known for his unusual subject matter, often associated with roadside architecture, especially diners. The popularity of Baeder's diner paintings and the spectacular sales of both editions of his book, *Diners*, spawned an avalanche of imitators. Baeder has been much more than a "diner painter," however, as shown by his original roadside photographs, his sign series, paintings of small-town America, Nashville and Southern images, classic Las Vegas casinos, and other subjects from the heyday of 20th-century automobile-oriented culture. Festival book: *John Baeder's Road Well Taken*

**Johnathon Scott Barrett** is a seventh-generation Georgian, and grew up amongst a family that placed high value on fresh, farm-to-table food. He has held onto these roots and become a renowned cook and host in culinary rich Savannah, Georgia. A nonprofit executive and CPA, he is also an avid reader, fisherman, and gardener. Festival book: *Rise and Shine! A Southern Son's Treasury of Food, Family, and Friends*

**Emily Bingham** is the great-niece of Henrietta Bingham. She is the author of *Mordecai: An Early American Family* and the coeditor of *The Southern Agrarians and the New Deal: Essays After "I'll Take My Stand."* She earned a PhD from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and frequently teaches at Centre College. She lives with her family in Louisville, Kentucky. Festival book: *Irrepressible: The Jazz Age Life of Henrietta Bingham*

**Meg Waite Clayton** is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of five novels, including the forthcoming *The Race for Paris* (August 2015), *The Wednesday Daughters*, *The Wednesday Sisters*, *The Four Ms. Bradwells*, and the Bellwether Prize finalist, *The Language of Light*. Her books have been translated into languages from German to Lithuanian to Chinese. She's written for *The Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *The San Jose Mercury News*, *The Miami Herald*, *Writer's Digest*, *Runner's World*, and public radio, and for *The New York Times* and *Forbes* online. A graduate of the University of Michigan and its law school, she lives in Palo Alto, California. Festival book: *The Race for Paris: A Novel*

**Michael Crummey** is a poet and storyteller and the author of several critically acclaimed novels. His most recent book, *Galore*, won the Commonwealth Prize for Canada. He lives in St. John's, Newfoundland. Festival book: *Sweetland: A Novel*

**Margaret Lazarus Dean** is the author of *The Time It Takes to Fall*. She is a recipient of fellowships from the NEA and the Tennessee Arts Commission and is an associate professor of English at the University of Tennessee. She lives in Knoxville. Festival book: *Leaving Orbit: Notes from the Last Days of American Spaceflight*

**Dennis Dunaway** was the bass player, lead songwriter, and theatrical conceptionalist of Alice Cooper and was inducted in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2011. Their hit single "School's Out" was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2015. Dennis continues writing songs, recording, and playing live concerts with Blue Coupe. Dennis lives with his wife Cindy in Connecticut. They have two daughters, Renee and Chelsea. Festival book: *Snakes! Guillotines! Electric Chairs!: My Adventures in the Alice Cooper Group*

**William Finnegan** is the author of *Cold New World, A Complicated War, Dateline Soweto*, and *Crossing the Line*. He has twice been a National Magazine Award finalist and has won numerous journalism awards, including two Overseas Press Club Awards since 2009. A staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 1987, he lives in Manhattan. Festival book: *Barbarian Days: A Surfing Life*

**Lauren Groff** is the *New York Times* bestselling author of two novels, *The Monsters of Templeton* and *Arcadia*, as well as the celebrated short-story collection, *Delicate Edible Birds*. She graduated from Amherst College and has an MFA in fiction from the University of Wisconsin Madison. Her work has appeared in a number of magazines, including *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, and *The Atlantic*, and in several of the annual The Best American Short Stories anthologies. Groff's fiction has won the Paul Bowles Prize for Fiction, the Medici Book Club Prize, the PEN/O. Henry Award, and the Pushcart Prize, and has been shortlisted for the Orange Prize for New Writers and a finalist for the L.A. Times Book Prize. Festival book: *Fates and Furies: A Novel*

**Lily Clayton Hansen**, a writer, journalist, and visual artist, is a Chicago native and current Nashville resident. She has contributed to the publications *Time Out Chicago*, *CS Chicago Social*, *CS Interiors*, *Luxe Interiors + Design*, *Nashville Scene*, *Native*, *Nashville Lifestyles*, and *Nashville Arts Magazine*. Subjects and readers alike have praised Lily for her in-depth profiles and unconventional interviewing skills, which always embody the true essence of her subject and because she genuinely listens with a lively, non-judgmental curiosity that encourages trust and honesty. Festival book: *Word of Mouth: Nashville Conversations*

**George Hodgman** is a veteran magazine and book editor who has worked at Simon & Schuster, *Vanity Fair*, and *Talk* magazine. His writing has appeared in *Entertainment Weekly*, *Interview*, *W*, and *Harper's Bazaar*, among other publications. He lives in New York City and Paris, Missouri. Festival book: *Bettyville: A Memoir*

**Greg Iles** spent his youth in Natchez, Mississippi. His first novel, *Spandau Phoenix*, was the first of fourteen *New York Times* bestsellers, and this trilogy continues the story of Penn Cage, protagonist of *The Quiet Game*, *Turning Angel*, and #1 *New York Times* bestseller *The Devil's Punchbowl*. Iles's novels have been made into films and published in more than thirty-five countries. He is a member of the lit-rock group The Rock Bottom Remainers, lives in Natchez with his wife, and has two children. Festival book: *The Bone Tree*

**Marlon James** was born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1970. He is the author of *The Book of Night Women*, which won the 2010 Dayton Literary Peace Prize, The Minnesota Book Award, and was a finalist for the 2010 National Book Critics Circle Award in fiction as well as an NAACP Image Award. His first novel, *John Crow's Devil*, was a finalist for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize and the Commonwealth Writers Prize, and was a *New York Times* Editor's Choice. James graduated from the University of the West Indies in 1991 with a degree in Language and Literature, and from Wilkes University in 2006 with a Masters in creative writing. His short fiction and nonfiction have appeared widely including in *Esquire*, *Granta*, and *The Caribbean Review of Books*. Festival book: *A Brief History of Seven Killings: A Novel*

**Tim Johnston** is the author of the debut adult novel *Descent*, the story collection *Irish Girl*, and the young adult novel *Never So Green*. Published in 2009, the stories in *Irish Girl* won an O. Henry Prize, the New Letters Award for Writers, and the Gival Press Short Story Award, while the collection itself won the 2009 Katherine Anne Porter Prize in Short Fiction. In 2005 the title story, "Irish Girl," was included in the David Sedaris anthology of favorites, *Children Playing Before a Statue of Hercules*. Johnston's stories have also appeared in *New England Review*, *New Letters*, the *Iowa Review*, the *Missouri Review*, *DoubleTake*, *Best Life Magazine*, and *Narrative Magazine*, among others. He holds degrees from the University of Iowa and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. He currently teaches in the creative writing program at the University of Memphis. Festival book: *Descent: A Novel*

**Harrison Scott Key** is a humor columnist for the *Oxford American* and a professor of English at the Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Georgia, where he lives with his wife and three children. His humor and essays have been featured in *The Best American Travel Writing* and numerous magazines. Festival book: *The World's Largest Man: A Memoir*

**Holly LeCraw**, an Atlanta native, grew up working in her father's bookstore, the late, great Oxford Books. Her work has appeared in *The Millions*, *Post Road*, *Image*, *The Believer*, *Necessary Fiction*, and various anthologies, and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her first book, *The Swimming Pool*, was a Kirkus Top Debut and a Good Morning America Best Book of Summer. She now lives outside Boston with her husband and three children. Festival book: *The Half-Brother: A Novel*

**Alan P. Lightman** is the author of six novels, including *Einstein's Dreams* and *The Diagnosis*, which was a finalist for the National Book Award. He is also the author of three collections of essays and several books on science. His work has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Granta*, *Harper's*, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books*, and *Nature*, among other publications. Trained as a theoretical physicist, Lightman has taught at Harvard and at MIT, where he was the first person to receive a dual faculty appointment in science and the humanities. He lives in the Boston area. Festival book: *Screening Room: A Memoir*

**Eric Litwin** is the author of *The Nuts: Bedtime at the Nut House* and the first four beloved, bestselling Pete the Cat books. He is also a seasoned children's performer. Festival book: *The Nuts: Sing and Dance in Your Polka-Dot Pants*

**Lorraine López** is an associate professor of English and co-founder of the Latino and Latina Studies Program at Vanderbilt University. She teaches in the Master of Fine Arts Program at Vanderbilt and is the author of five books of fiction, including *The Gifted Gabaldon Sisters* and *Homocide Survivors Picnic and Other Stories*, a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Prize in Fiction in 2010. Festival book: *The Darling*

**David Maraniss** was born in Detroit and is an associate editor at *The Washington Post*. Maraniss is a Pulitzer-Prize winning journalist and bestselling author of *First in His Class: A Biography of Bill Clinton*; *Rome 1960: The Olympics that Stirred the World*; *Barack Obama: The Story*; *Clemente: The Passion and Grace of Baseball's Last Hero*; *They Marched Into Sunlight: War and Peace, Vietnam and America, October 1967*; and *When Pride Still Mattered: A Life of Vince Lombardi*, which was hailed by *Sports Illustrated* as "maybe the best sports biography ever published." He lives in Washington DC and Madison, Wisconsin. Festival book: *Once in a Great City: A Detroit Story*

**Sarah McCoy** is the *New York Times* bestselling author of the 2012 Goodreads Choice Award Best Historical Fiction nominee *The Baker's Daughter* and *The Time It Snowed in Puerto Rico*. She has taught English writing at Old Dominion University and at the University of Texas at El Paso. She calls Virginia home but presently lives with her husband and their dog, Gilbert, in El Paso, Texas. Festival book: *The Mapmaker's Children: A Novel*

**Doug Orr** is president emeritus of Warren Wilson College, where he founded the Swannanoa Gathering music workshops. Festival book: *Wayfaring Strangers: The Musical Voyage from Scotland and Ulster to Appalachia*

**Benjamin Percy** is the author of the novels *Red Moon* and *The Wilding* and two short story collections, *Refresh, Refresh* and *The Language of Elk*. His writing has appeared in *Esquire*, *GQ*, *Time*, *Tin House* and elsewhere. His honors include the Pushcart Prize, an NEA grant, the Plimpton Prize for Fiction, and a Whiting Award. Raised in the high desert of central Oregon, he lives in Minnesota. Festival book: *The Dead Lands: A Novel*

**Tom Piazza** is the author of ten books, including the novels *City of Refuge*, which won the Willie Morris Award, and *My Cold War*, as well as the book-length essay "Why New Orleans Matters." He writes for HBO's hit drama series *Treme* and is at work on a new novel. He lives in New Orleans. Festival book: *A Free State: A Novel*

**Padgett Powell** is the author of five novels, including *The Interrogative Mood* and *Edisto*, which was nominated for the National Book Award. His writing has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *Little Star*, and *The Paris Review*, and he has received a Whiting Writers' Award and the Rome Fellowship in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He lives in Gainesville, Florida, where he teaches writing at MFA@FLA, the writing program of the University of Florida. Festival book: *Cries for Help, Various: A Novel*

**Alice Randall** was born in Detroit, grew up in Washington, D.C., and graduated from Harvard. She is the author of the *New York Times* bestseller *The Wind Done Gone*, *Pushkin and the Queen of Spades*, and *Rebel Yell*. She is also an award-winning songwriter, and the first black woman in history to write a number one country song. Randall lives with her husband in Nashville and is currently writer-in-residence at Vanderbilt University. Like Ada, she's done battle with her weight and won. Festival book: *Soul Food Love: Healthy Recipes Inspired by One Hundred Years of Cooking in a Black Family*

**Fiona Ritchie** is the founder, producer, and host of National Public Radio's "The Thistle & Shamrock." She was awarded an MBE (Member of the Order of the British Empire) in 2014. Festival book: *Wayfaring Strangers: The Musical Voyage from Scotland and Ulster to Appalachia*

**James Scott** was born in Boston and grew up in upstate New York. He holds a BA from Middlebury College and an MFA from Emerson College. His fiction has appeared in *Ploughshares*, *One Story*, *American Short Fiction*, and other publications. He lives in western Massachusetts with his wife and dog. *The Kept* is his first novel. Festival book: *The Kept: A Novel*

**Christopher Scotton** is an experienced public speaker, seminar leader, online marketer, and technology entrepreneur. After a stint as a venture capitalist, he joined his third start-up, a computer-aided design (CAD) software company, where he is currently President and CEO. Scotton is a recognized expert and frequent speaker on search engine marketing, search engine optimization, social media marketing and online lead generation. Festival book: *The Secret Wisdom of the Earth: A Novel*

**Michael Sims** is the author of the acclaimed *The Story of Charlotte's Web*, *Apollo's Fire: A Day on Earth in Nature and Imagination*, *Adam's Navel: A Natural and Cultural History of the Human Form*, and editor of *Dracula's Guest: A Connoisseur's Collection of Vampire Stories* and *The Dead Witness: A Connoisseur's Collection of Victorian Detective Stories*. He lives in western Pennsylvania. Festival book: *The Adventures of Henry Thoreau: A Young Man's Unlikely Path to Walden Pond*

**Ed Tarkington** received a BA from Furman University, an MA from the University of Virginia, and a PhD from the Graduate Creative Writing Program at Florida State. A frequent contributor to *Chapter16.org*, his articles, essays, and stories have appeared in *Nashville Scene*, *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, *Post Road*, the *Pittsburgh Quarterly*, the *Southeast Review*, and elsewhere. A native of Central Virginia, he lives in Nashville, Tennessee. Festival book: *Only Love Can Break Your Heart: A Novel*

**Paul Theroux** is the author of many highly acclaimed books. His novels include *The Lower River* and *The Mosquito Coast*, and his renowned travel books include *Ghost Train to the Eastern Star* and *Dark Star Safari*. He lives in Hawaii and Cape Cod. Festival book: *Deep South: Four Seasons on Back Roads*

**Dana Walrath** is the granddaughter of survivors of the Armenian genocide of 1915. She earned a PhD in anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania, an MFA in Writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts, and a BA from Barnard College, Columbia University. She completed *Like Water on Stone*, her first novel, during the year she spent as a Fulbright Scholar in Armenia working on a project that builds on her award-winning graphic memoir series *Aliceheimer's*. Awards for her novel include the 2015 Notable Book for Global Society, the 2015 CBC Notable Trade Book for Social Studies, and YALSA's Best Fiction Nominee for 2015. When not in the mountains of Armenia, Dana lives in the mountains of Vermont where she is on faculty at the University of Vermont's College of Medicine. She has spoken extensively about the role of comics in healing through North America and Europe including talks at TEDxBattenkill and TEDxYerevan. Festival book: *Like Water on Stone*

**M.O. Walsh's** fiction and essays have appeared in *The New York Times*, *Oxford American*, *The Southern Review*, *American Short Fiction*, *Epoch*, and *Best New American Voices*, among others. He is a graduate of the MFA program at the University of Mississippi and is currently the director of the Creative Writing Workshop at the University of New Orleans, where he lives and works, happily, with his wife and family. Festival book: *My Sunshine Away: A Novel*

**Claire Vaye Watkins** is the author of *Battleborn* and a National Book Foundation 5 Under 35 fiction writer, as well as the recipient of the Story Prize, the American Academy of Arts and Letters's Rosenthal Family Foundation Award, and a Guggenheim Fellowship, among many other honors. Her stories and essays have appeared in *Granta*, *One Story*, *The Paris Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Glimmer Train*, *Best of the West 2011*, *Best of the Southwest 2013*, and elsewhere. An assistant professor at the University of Michigan, Watkins has also taught at Bucknell and Princeton, and she and her husband, the writer Derek Palacio, are codirectors of the Mojave School, a creative writing workshop for teenagers in rural Nevada. Festival book: *Gold, Fame, Citrus: A Novel*

**Rebecca Wells** is a novelist, actor, and playwright. She is the author of the *New York Times* bestsellers *Ya-Yas in Bloom*, *Little Altars Everywhere* (winner of the Western States Book Award), and *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood* (winner of the American Booksellers Book of the Year Award, short-listed for the Orange Prize), which was made into a feature film. She performs from her work internationally, and her books have been translated into twenty-three languages. A native of Louisiana, she now makes her home on an island in Puget Sound, Washington, with her spaniel and three sheep.

**Caroline Randall Williams** is an award-winning published poet, currently pursuing her MFA at the University of Mississippi. Prior to matriculating at Ole Miss the 2010 Harvard graduate spent one year as a 1st grade teacher and another teaching 9th grade English. Williams is a third generation children's book writer. She is the great-granddaughter of Arna Bontemps who wrote several critically praised children's books including *Popo and Fifina* and *The Fast Sooner Hound*. Like her great-grandfather who co-wrote (often with Langston Hughes), Williams enjoys collaboration. Her debut novel, *The Diary of B.B. Bright, Possible Princess*, is co-written with her mother. Williams first attended the Southern Festival of Books as a three year old. Interviewed by a reporter, she was quoted in the *Tennessean* as saying that she "likes to write." Twenty-two years later she's back to see what a new generation of young Southern Festival of Books readers makes of what she has written. Festival book: *Soul Food Love: Healthy Recipes Inspired by One Hundred Years of Cooking in a Black Family*

**Don Winston** grew up in Nashville and graduated from Princeton University. After a stint at Ralph Lauren headquarters in New York, he moved to Los Angeles to work in entertainment. *S'wanee: A Paranoid Thriller* was his debut novel. His second novel - *The Union Club: A Subversive Thriller* - followed a year later. His brand new thriller - *The Gristmill Playhouse* - set at a summer stock theater in New Hope, PA, will be released in paperback May 2015. He lives in Hollywood. Festival book: *The Gristmill Playhouse: A Nightmare in Three Acts*

**Nicki Pendleton Wood** loves food too much and has put two decades into food writing, restaurant reviewing, cookbook editing and blogging, moving between books, newspapers, magazines and blogs. She was a food writer and restaurant reviewer for the *Nashville Banner*, *Nashville Scene*, *Nashville City Paper*, then the *Nashville Scene's* daily food blogger for four years. She taught journalism and edited cookbooks in Cambridge, England, for several years and has a pretty convincing English accent. A member of the International Association of Culinary Professionals, she's one of about roughly 350 people worldwide who hold the group's CCP certification. Her own blogs include *Tupperware Avalanche* and *The Project Kitchen*. She recently began a second career as a mammographer. Festival book: *Southern Cooking for Company: More than 200 Southern Hospitality Secrets and Show-Off Recipes*

**Rick Yancey** is the author of thirteen novels and a memoir. His books have been published in over twenty languages and have earned numerous accolades and awards from around the world. His young adult novel, *The Extraordinary Adventures of Alfred Kropp*, was named a "Best Book of the Year" by *Publishers Weekly* and was nominated for the Carnegie Medal. In 2010, Rick received a Michael L. Printz Honor for *The Monstrumologist*. The sequel, *The Curse of the Wendigo*, was a finalist for the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize. His latest novel, *The 5th Wave*, the first in an epic sci-fi trilogy, made its worldwide debut in 2013, and will soon be a major motion picture for GK Films and Sony Pictures. Festival book: *The Infinite Sea: The Second Book of the 5th Wave*



## About Authors in the Round

The Authors in the Round dinner was founded in 2008 by Jean Bottorff and Todd Bottorff and quickly became a signature event in Nashville and a vital part of the Southern Festival of Books fundraising effort. The 2015 dinner will take place at the historic War Memorial Auditorium on Friday, October 9, in conjunction with the Festival weekend. Guests mingle and dine with 40 Festival authors for an evening of literary conversation and celebration of the written word. The evening begins at 6:30 p.m. with cocktails under the stars in the courtyard. For dinner, each table is paired with an author, and each guest at the table receives a copy of the author's book. The evening concludes with specialty drinks in the courtyard.