



Participating Authors Bios

Michael Connelly is the bestselling author of 38 crime novels with 85 million copies sold worldwide. His most notable series includes the characters LAPD Detective Hieronymus "Harry" Bosch and criminal defense attorney Mickey Haller. He is executive producer of the TV series, *Bosch* and *The Lincoln Lawyer*.

Laurie Halse Anderson writes for young readers, teenagers and adults and has had eight New York Times bestsellers, including, *SHOUT*, a memoir-in-verse about surviving sexual assault at age 13. Anderson has been honored for her defense of intellectual freedom by the National Coalition Against Censorship and the National Council of Teachers of English, and recently received the world's largest children's book prize, the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award.

David Baldacci is an attorney whose 47 bestselling suspense novels and legal thrillers have sales exceeding 150 million copies, with several adapted for film and television. He has also written novels for young readers. He started writing as a child, using a lined notebook his mother gave him to "keep him quiet."

Brit Bennett published her debut novel, *The Mothers*, in 2016 to critical acclaim and a place on The New York Times bestseller list; her second in 2020, *The Vanishing Half*, also was a Times bestseller. Like Nadia, the protagonist of *The Mothers*, Bennett was a smart and ambitious African American teenager when, at age 17, she began writing the novel in her childhood bedroom. It would become one of the biggest literary debuts in fall 2016.

Richard Blanco is a Cuban-American poet and also an engineer who this year received the National Humanities Medal from President Biden. In addition to several poetry collections, he published *For All of Us, One Today* in 2013, a poetic reflection on his life-changing role as the inaugural poet at Barack Obama's second inaugural. The book offers a spiritual embrace of Americans and his vision for poetry's new role in the national consciousness.

Judy Blume has published 29 novels for children, young adults and adults, which have sold 90 million copies in 39 languages. She began writing in 1959 and her works have become a touchstone for generations of young readers, including *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*, *Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing*, *Deenie*, and *Blubber*.

Ruby Bridges is a civil rights icon, the first African-American child to desegregate the all-white William Franz Elementary School in Nov. 1960. She has written a half dozen books for adults and children on her experiences and has been outspoken on the recent wave of book banning. Her memoir *Through My Eyes* tells the story of the pivotal desegregation event in history as it unfolded around her.

Lee Child is a British writer of thriller novels, best known for the 26-novel *Jack Reacher* series, about a former American military policeman. The books have sold 100



million copies worldwide and were adapted for television. He started writing in the late 1990s after losing a production job with Grenada TV, where he had worked on acclaimed series like the *Jewel in the Crown*.

Suzanne Collins is best known for the popular young adult dystopian series *The Hunger Games*, a New York Times bestseller for more than six years, with sales of more than 100 million copies. The books were adapted for film starting in 2012. Collins is a former children's TV writer whose shows won multiple Emmy awards. Her picture book, *Year of the Jungle*, deals with the year she was six and her father, an Air Force veteran, deployed to Vietnam.

Gillian Flynn is the author of bestselling thriller and mystery novels, which have been adapted for Hollywood. She wrote The New York Times bestseller *Gone Girl*, along with the screenplay, which was nominated for a Golden Globe. Two of her other books, *Sharp Objects* and *Dark Places*, were Times bestsellers. She adapted *Sharp Objects* for HBO. The daughter of a film professor, she is a former journalist and critic for Entertainment Weekly.

Amanda Gorman, the poet and activist, rose to fame in 2021 for writing and delivering her poem, *The Hill We Climb*, at the inauguration of Joe Biden. Her work focuses on race, feminism, oppression and marginalization, along with the African diaspora. Gorman was the first ever National Youth Poet Laureate. She published the poetry book *The One for Whom Food Is Not Enough* in 2015.

Nikki Grimes is the bestselling author of more than 50 books for children and young adults and a prolific artist. She started writing poetry at age 6 and has continued since. Her many award-winning books include Coretta Scott King Award winners *Bronx Masquerade* and *Jazmin's Notebook*. She also wrote The New York Times bestseller *Barack Obama: Son of Promise, Child of Hope* and, most recently, *Garvey's Choice* and *One Last Word: Wisdom from the Harlem Renaissance*.

Daniel Handler is best known for his popular children's book series *A Series of Unfortunate Events* and *All the Wrong Questions*, published under the pen name Lemony Snicket. His books have sold more than 70 million copies, were translated into 40 languages, and adapted for film, stage and television. He has also written seven novels.

Khaled Hosseini was born in Kabul, Afghanistan, and moved to the United States in 1980. A former doctor, he is the author of the New York Times bestsellers *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, and *And the Mountains Echoed*. A U.S. Goodwill Envoy to the UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, he formed a nonprofit, the Khaled Hosseini Foundation, to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan.

David Levithan is a young adult fiction author and editor who has written numerous books featuring strong male gay characters, including *Boy Meets Boy* and *Naomi and Ely's No Kiss List*. Three were made into films. Six of Levithan's books have won or



been finalists for the Lambda Literary Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature, making him the most celebrated author in the category.

Casey McQuiston is the author of romance novels in the new adult fiction genre, best known for their New York Times best-selling debut novel *Red, White & Royal Blue*, in which the son of America's first female president falls in love with a prince of England, and also *One Last Stop*. McQuiston made their debut in the young adult fiction genre with their book *I Kissed Shara Wheeler* which was released in 2022. They were included in Time magazine's 2022 Time 100 Next list.

Brad Meltzer is the bestselling author of political and legal thrillers, along with conspiracy fiction and superhero fiction for DC Comics. His bestsellers include *The Lightning Rod* and *The Escape Artist*, along with 11 other thrillers. His non-fiction includes *The Nazi Conspiracy*, about a secret plot to kill FDR, Stalin and Churchill and the Ordinary People Change the World kids' book series.

James Patterson has written more than 200 novels and had more than 114 New York Times bestsellers, holding the Times record for bestsellers by a single author. His books have sold more than 425 million copies and he was the first person to sell one million e-books. His mysteries and thrillers include the Alex Cross series, the *Women's Murder Club*, *Jane Effing Smith*, and *Maximum Ride*. He has also written true stories about the Kennedys, John Lennon, and Princess Diana and he co-authored bestsellers with Bill Clinton and Dolly Parton.

Jodi Picoult is the New York Times bestselling author of 30 novels, translated into 34 languages with 70 million copies in print worldwide. Picoult writes popular fiction centering on family themes and moral dilemmas. Her books have covered a wide range of controversial or moral issues, including abortion, the Holocaust, assisted suicide, race relations, eugenics, LGBTQ+ rights, fertility issues, the death penalty and school shootings.

Nora Roberts has published more than 225 romance novels, some under the pen names J.D. Robb, Jill March and Sarah Hardesty, with over 500 million copies of her books sold. She was the first author to be inducted into the Romance Writers of America Hall of Fame. She began to write during an East Coast blizzard in 1979; with no morning kindergarten for her two boys she has said she had little else to do and immediately was drawn to the writing process.

Todd Parr is the author and illustrator of more than 60 books for children, including The New York Times bestselling *I Love You Book*, *The Earth Book*, and *The Thankful Book*. His books are known for bold images, humor and inclusive stories. They are available in 20 languages. Parr co-created the popular daytime animated TV series *ToddWorld*.



Kathy Reichs is an American crime writer, forensic anthropologist and academic who teaches at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Her work inspired the television series *Bones*. She has written 21 novels, which have been translated into 30 languages. Twenty of those novels constitute the "Temperance Brennan" series whose heroine is a forensic anthropologist.

Reshma Saujani is the founder of the nonprofit "Girls Who Code," which aims to increase the number of women in computer science. A lawyer, she wrote the bestseller *Brave, Not Perfect*, about how women are taught to "play it safe" from an early age and how being afraid to take risks compromises our achievements. Her latest book, *Pay Up*, confronts the "big lie" of corporate feminism and presents a bold plan to address the burnout and inequity harming working women today.

Mo Willems is a writer, animator, voice actor, and children's book author. He created the animated television series *Sheep in the Big City* for Cartoon Network, worked on *Sesame Street* and *The Off-Beats*, and wrote the popular children's book series *Elephant and Piggie*.