

Library of Congress
National Book Festival
Indiana Program Guide



Invitation to Participate in the National Book Festival:

Indiana is home to a deep and rich literary heritage stemming from our long-ago classic writers like Gene Stratton-Porter and James Whitcomb Riley to the big names of the sixties and seventies – Kurt Vonnegut, Mari Evans, Etheridge Knight, and many others – all the way up to today where everyone knows names like John Green and Meg Cabot plus characters like Clifford, Garfield, and Raggedy Ann and Andy. It's impossible to keep track of a list of Indiana writers because new ones emerge and succeed daily. Today, Maurice Broaddus is writing Afrofuturist science fiction. Ashley C. Ford writes about race and body image. Adrian Matejka is the new editor of *Poetry* magazine. Kelsey Timmerman's investigations lead to books about responsible consumerism. What draws all these voices together? Being from Indiana. Being Hoosiers.

Thankfully there are ample opportunities to celebrate our Indiana writers. The Indiana Authors Awards elevate Hoosier literary voices through prizes, programs, and initiatives designed to connect readers to authors. Our Indiana media outlets frequently release stories and articles about top Hoosier writers, past and present. The Indiana Center for the Book even has a YouTube series where a "Hoosier Toucan" interviews contemporary Indiana authors, along with a light-hearted show and tell segment. That being said, it's especially exciting when Indiana authors get the chance to be showcased on a national and indeed international stage.

The National Book Festival is a premiere event in the literary calendar. Over the course of its decades long history, the Festival has become one of the most prominent literary events in the nation. Indiana libraries and cultural institutions can participate in the festival in a myriad of ways, from actually attending in person, to watch parties for author talks, to having a book discussion about one of the featured speakers. The possibilities are endless. This toolkit is being provided to encourage meaningful participation in the festival at a local level. Who better to present this national event to our local communities than the librarians, teachers, and cultural leaders who connect to Hoosiers daily?

We invite you to use this toolkit to connect to the National Book Festival. Explore the writings of an author you've never heard of before. Learn more about the Library of Congress, your national library. Listen to a podcast interview in a group and discuss it afterwards. Share the ways you use the toolkit so that others can benefit from your creative ideas in the future. Above all, enjoy connecting with Hoosier literary heritage. The Golden Age of Indiana literature isn't in the past. **It's beginning all over again.**



When and Where:

The 22nd annual Library of Congress National Book Festival will be held on Saturday, September 3 from 9 a.m. until 8 p.m. at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C. Doors will open at 8:30 a.m. The festival is free and open to everyone. This year's theme is "Books Bring Us Together." A selection of programs will be livestreamed online and videos of all programs will be available shortly after the Festival.

Additional virtual content will be available via the Library of Congress's website and the Indiana Center for the Book's website.

About the National Book Festival:

The Library of Congress National Book Festival is an annual literary event that brings together best-selling authors, poets and illustrators with thousands of book fans for author talks, panel discussions, book signings and other engaging activities. The National Book Festival was founded in 2001 by Laura Bush and then-Librarian of Congress James H. Billington. The first Festival was held Sept. 8, 2001. Over the years, the Festival has evolved immensely. It began on the Library of Congress grounds and in its buildings on Capitol Hill, expanding soon thereafter to the lawn of the Capitol and then to the National Mall. The Washington Convention Center has hosted the event in recent years, and in 2020 and 2021 the Festival went virtual. Attendance has skyrocketed from 25,000 in 2001 to more than 200,000 in 2019. The festival is funded by private donors and corporate sponsors who share the Library's commitment to reading and literacy. Since 2010, National Book Festival Co-Chairman David M. Rubenstein has been the festival's lead benefactor.

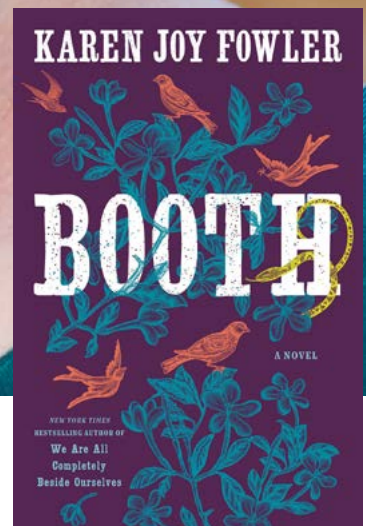
Indiana has participated in the festival in a variety of ways, primarily through selecting an "Indiana Book" to be featured in the Great Reads From Great Places line-up and through participation in the Pavilion of the States; a grouping of over 50 booths celebrating the unique personalities and attributes of the fifty states, the District of Columbia and the island territories. This year Indiana was invited to feature two authors, one author for adults and one for children.



National Book Festival Featured Writers from Indiana:

Each year the National Book Festival features prominent writers from around the country and world. Unsurprisingly, several Hoosier writers are in the lineup this year: Karen Joy Fowler, Laird Hunt and Leah Johnson.

- **Karen Joy Fowler – Featured Author on the Pop Lit stage at the in-person National Book Festival.**
- **Laird Hunt – Indiana’s featured Adult Author**
- **Leah Johnson – Indiana’s featured Youth Author**



KAREN JOY FOWLER

Author of *Booth*

About Karen Joy Fowler:

Karen Joy Fowler is the *New York Times* bestselling author of six novels and three short story collections. Her 2004 novel, *The Jane Austen Book Club*, spent thirteen weeks on the *New York Times* bestsellers list and was a *New York Times* Notable Book. Fowler's previous novel, *Sister Noon*, was a finalist for the 2001 PEN/Faulkner Award for fiction. Her debut novel, *Sarah Canary*, won the Commonwealth medal for best first novel by a Californian, was listed for the *Irish Times* International Fiction Prize as well as the Bay Area Book Reviewers Prize, and was a *New York Times* Notable Book. Fowler's short story collection *Black Glass* won the World Fantasy Award in 1999, and her collection *What I Didn't See* won the World Fantasy Award in 2011. Her most recent novel *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves*, won the 2014 PEN/Faulkner Award for fiction and was short-listed for the 2014 Man Booker Prize. Her new novel *Booth* was published in March 2022.

She is the co-founder of the Otherwise Award and the current president of the Clarion Foundation (also known as Clarion San Diego). Fowler and her husband, who have two grown children and seven grandchildren, live in Santa Cruz, California. Fowler also supports a chimp named Caesar who lives at the Tacugama Chimpanzee Sanctuary in Sierra Leone. Born and raised in an academic family in Bloomington, Indiana, she holds an undergraduate degree from the University of California, Berkeley and a graduate degree from University of California, Davis. She lives in Santa Cruz, California.

About *Booth*:

Published in March of 2022, *Booth* is an epic novel about the family behind one of the most infamous figures in American history: John Wilkes Booth. In 1822, a secret family moves into a secret cabin some thirty miles northeast of Baltimore, to farm, to hide, and to bear ten children over the course of the next sixteen years. Junius Booth—breadwinner, celebrated Shakespearean actor and master of the house in all ways—is at once a mesmerizing talent and a man of terrifying instability. One by one the children arrive, as year by year, the country draws closer to the boiling point of secession and civil war.

As the children grow and the tenor of the world shifts, the Booths cement their place as one of the country's leading theatrical families. But behind the curtains of the many stages they have graced, multiple scandals, family triumphs, and disasters begin to take their toll. A startling portrait of a country in the throes of change and a vivid exploration of brother- and sisterhood, *Booth* is a riveting historical novel focused on the very things that bind, and break, a family.

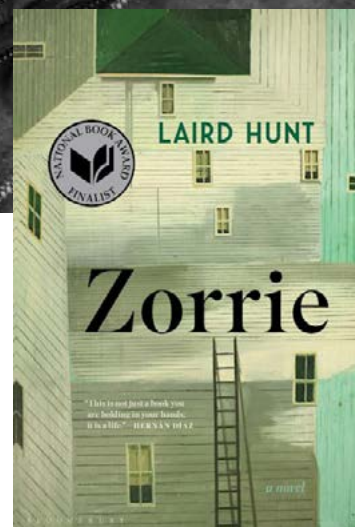
Discussion Questions for *Booth*:

1. How did Fowler's focus on the lives of those around the infamous figure of John Wilkes Booth change your understanding of these historical events?
2. In the author's note, Fowler claims, "I did not want to write a book about John Wilkes. This is a man who craved attention and has gotten too much of it; I didn't think he deserved mine." Why do you think Fowler wants to avoid centering John Wilkes, and is she successful?
3. Literary and theatrical references are deeply entwined within the lives of the characters. How did the references to literature, Shakespeare in particular, build upon your understanding of the characters and their motivations? If someone were to write the story of your life, what references do you think they might use?
4. How did the facts about Lincoln's life and mindset affect your understanding of the story? Why do you think Fowler included this historical context?
5. What did you think about the Booth family and their attitudes towards slavery? What factors helped form these opinions?
6. In the afterword, Fowler says, "So there are things here that I am confident are true and things that I know I made up. But there are also things I did not make up, yet am uncertain are true." How do you understand the lines between fact and fiction in the novel? Does it matter to your understanding of the novel or of history if the events are "true" or not? Does the novel change your ideas of what a "true story" really is?
7. In the author's note, Fowler says she was inspired by the recent wave of mass shootings. Where do you see the connections between this historical event and today's epidemic of violence. How is this story still relevant today?



LAIRD HUNT

Author of *Zorrie*



ABOUT LAIRD HUNT :

Laird Hunt is the author of eight novels, including the 2021 National Book Award finalist *Zorrie*. He is the winner of the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award for Fiction, the Grand Prix de Littérature Américaine, the Bridge Prize and a finalist for both the Pen/Faulkner and the Prix Femina Étranger. His reviews and essays have been published in the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Daily Beast*, the *Guardian*, the *Irish Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*, and his fiction and translations have appeared in many literary journals in the United States and abroad. A former United Nations press officer who was largely raised in rural Indiana, he now lives in Providence, Rhode Island where he teaches in Brown University's Literary Arts Program.

ABOUT ZORRIE :

Zorrie tells the story of one Hoosier woman's life convulsed and transformed by events of the 20th century, specifically the Great Depression. Set in Clinton County, Indiana, Zorrie is orphaned twice, first by her parents and then her aunt. She ekes out a living, eventually finding work in a radium processing plant in Illinois. But when Indiana calls Zorrie home, she finally finds the love and community that have eluded her in and around the small town of Hillisburg. And yet, even as she tries to build a new life, Zorrie discovers that her trials have only begun.

Traveling across the timeline of one woman's life, *Zorrie* explores the powerful forces that surround and compel us: time, love, grief, and beauty. Like all of us, Zorrie survives by finding courage in unlikely places. Laird Hunt's novel is a testament to the complexity of the human heart and the unyielding demands of time as well as a study in rural Midwestern life.

Discussion Questions for *Zorrie*:

1. Discuss the symbolic significance of Luna powder. Zorrie and her friends celebrate the magical substance, not knowing its harmful effects; they eat it by the spoonful and cover their bodies with its glow. How does the powder weave itself through Zorrie's life? What does it symbolize? What does it mean that something so whimsical and beautiful can be so destructive?
2. Throughout the novel, fire is an important symbol. Consider the important moments when fire plays a significant role in the lives of Zorrie, Noah, and Opal. In your opinion, what does fire symbolize to these characters? How does fire, literally and figuratively bring these characters closer together or further apart?
3. Consider the scene in which Zorrie visits Opal. What stood out to you? Was Opal portrayed the way you had expected? What does Opal's circumstance reveal about the way that we, as a society, have historically handled the mentally ill? Do you believe that Opal is better off in a hospital or with her family? Why?
4. Opal says to Zorrie: "It's a cave all your own, Zorrie Underwood. Whether you glow in it or you don't. It's a cave behind your face. It's yours. It belongs to you." How do Opal's words impact Zorrie? What does Opal help her to understand? What are your impressions of this quote and how it reflects on the novel's meaning?
5. Discuss the power of companionship in the novel. In times of struggle, who has shown up to support you? What did their support look like?
6. Explore the different ways in which the novel's characters express grief. What does healing look like for Zorrie and others? What is the difference between coping and healing? Are there some losses from which one cannot recover?
7. Zorrie struggles to define the importance of religion. Is religious faith the only kind? Where are we most faithful? Where do you find faith in your life?
8. Virgil, as a character, serves as a beacon of education, inspiration, and poetry. According to Virgil, how do we build resilience in our lives? How do our relationships form the basis of our survival?

9. Throughout her life, Zorrie grounds herself in the familiarity and solidity of the seasons and the soil. In addition, Zorrie's life takes place during an era of American history in which women were not traditionally treated as protagonists. Discuss the effect of the novel's setting. How does Hunt use the setting to both advance and enhance Zorrie's story? What are the qualities of this time period that are unique, and how do they influence Zorrie's life?
10. Compare and contrast the novel's two main relationships: Noah and Opal and Zorrie and Harold. Discuss how these relationships illustrate the balance between love and loss. How do we carry our love for others throughout our lives?
11. Explore the book's trajectory. How does Zorrie change over the course of her life? At the end, how does Zorrie reflect on her life? What does she consider most important? As a reader, what is the impact of following one character from childhood to the end of their life?
12. Since she first saw him, Zorrie and Noah have been inextricably connected. Discuss their complex relationship. What universal forces pull them together and keep them apart? How do they show each other that they care? What does this particular relationship teach us about the nature of love and friendship?
13. Consider the epigraphs that begin each chapter. Individually, the epigraphs are a harbinger of what each chapter holds. Combined, they form an elegant poem. What is the significance of using this structure to tell Zorrie's story? Were there epigraphs that stood out to you, and why?



LEAH JOHNSON

Author of You Should See Me in a Crown

About Leah Johnson:

Leah Johnson was born and raised in central Indiana. Her bestselling debut YA novel, *You Should See Me in a Crown* was the inaugural Reese's Book Club YA pick, a Stonewall Honor Book, a Junior Library Guild Selection, an ALA Rainbow List Top Ten selection, and was named one of Cosmopolitan's 15 Best Young Adult Books of 2020. In 2021, *USA Today* listed Leah as one of 50 Must-Read Black YA Writers, and *TIME* named *You Should See Me in a Crown* one of the 100 Best Young Adult Books of All Time. Leah is a Lambda Literary Emerging Writers Fellow whose work has been published or is forthcoming in BuzzFeed, Cosmopolitan, Teen Vogue, and Harper's Bazaar among others. When she's not writing or ranting about pop culture and politics on Twitter, Leah is a professor of creative writing and composition.

About *You Should See Me in a Crown*:

Liz Lighty has always believed she's too black, too poor, and too awkward to shine in her small, rich, prom-obsessed midwestern town. But it's okay — Liz has a plan that will get her out of Campbell, Indiana, forever: attend the uber-elite Pennington College, play in their world-famous orchestra, and become a doctor. But, when the financial aid she was counting on unexpectedly falls through, Liz's plans come crashing down . . . until she's reminded of her school's scholarship for prom king and queen. There's nothing Liz wants to do less than endure a gauntlet of social media trolls, catty competitors, and humiliating public events, but despite her devastating fear of the spotlight she's willing to do whatever it takes to get to Pennington. The only thing that makes it halfway bearable is the new girl in school, Mack. She's smart, funny, and just as much of an outsider as Liz. But Mack is also in the running for queen. Will falling for the competition keep Liz from her dreams . . . or make them come true?

Discussion Questions for *You Should See Me in a Crown*:

Provided by Scholastic, publisher of *You Should See Me in a Crown*

1. Leah Johnson uses a James Baldwin quotation at the beginning of the novel. Having read this at the beginning of the book, what do you expect for Liz's story?
2. Liz Lighty's town is obsessed with the tradition of prom, and students at Campbell County High School stage elaborate 'promposals'. How would you react to a dramatic promposal?
3. *You Should See Me in a Crown* 'celebrates the beauty of individuality' (School Library Journal). Do you agree? If so, what makes this book a celebration of individuality?
4. Campbell Confidential is a social media app used at Liz Lighty's school. Do you think Campbell Confidential is a force for good or bad? Would you use an app like this if it were popular at your school?
5. Liz's brother Robbie suffers with sickle cell anemia, and they lost their mother to the same illness. Why do you think Leah Johnson chose to highlight this illness in *You Should See Me in a Crown*?
6. Who would you cast in a film adaptation of this book?
7. Consider Liz's relationships with other characters in the book, especially Jordan, Robbie, Mack and Gabi. What does this book teach us about friendship, family and love?



Previous Great Reads

About the 2021 Great Reads Selection: The Season of Styx Malone

In The Season of Styx Malone, Caleb wants to experience life beyond his small town in Indiana. With a whole summer of adventure before him, Caleb and his brother, Bobby Gene, encounter Styx Malone, a cool kid with some big secrets. The promise of the Great Escalator Trade (trading a small thing for something better on the way to reaching what you really want, in this case a scooter) tests the kids and their friendships as things get crazier than they ever imagined. Can it get any crazier than trading your baby sister for a bag of fireworks? Kekla Magoon's childhood experiences in Fort Wayne influenced the writing of the book. "I grew up in Fort Wayne...we didn't have woods, but we had a lot of trees and we had that sense of, 'we're going out in the backyard, it's our space, it's separate from our parents.'" In this madcap, heartwarming, one-thing-leads-to-another adventure, friendships are forged, loyalties are tested...and miracles just might be possible.

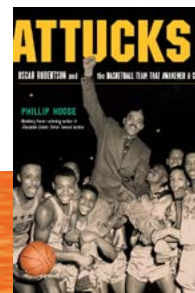
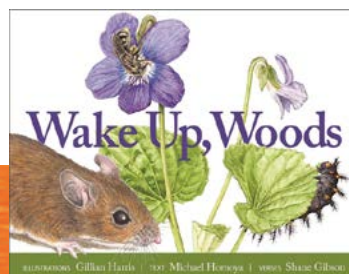
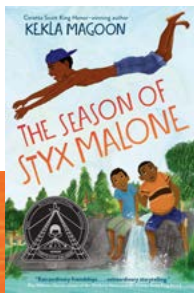
About the 2020 Great Reads Selection: Wake Up, Woods

Wake Up, Woods pairs informational text with clever verses to inform and delight the reader about plants native to North American forests. *Wake Up, Woods* is not only written and illustrated by Hoosiers, but each of the plants highlighted in the book is native to Indiana and can be found in the springtime in parks and preserves – and even in shade gardens around yards. Detailed illustrations, lilting verses and scientific explanations make *Wake Up, Woods* an important text for anyone wanting to wake up to the wonder around them when visiting the woods. This is an excellent nature book to share with young readers and is perfect for the classroom, or to tuck in a backpack before a hike.

About the 2019 Great Reads Selection:

ATTUCKS: Oscar Robertson and the Basketball Team that Awakened a City

By winning the state high school basketball championship in 1955, ten teens from an Indianapolis school meant to be the centerpiece of racially segregated education in the state shattered the myth of their inferiority. Their brilliant coach had fashioned an unbeatable team from a group of boys born in the South and raised in poverty. Anchored by the astonishing Oscar Robertson, a future college and NBA star, the Crispus Attucks Tigers went down in history as the first state champions from Indianapolis and the first all-black team in U.S. history to win a racially open championship tournament—an integration they had forced with their on-court prowess. From native Hoosier and award-winning author Phillip Hoose comes this true story of a team up against impossible odds, making a difference when it mattered most.



Program Ideas

Watch Parties — watch one of the author talks presented through the festival and discuss with assembled group from your community. A selection of programs will be livestreamed online, and videos of all programs will be available shortly after the Festival.

Have a **book club** for one of Indiana's featured titles.

Explore the various authors being featured at the festival. Create a list of titles owned by your library and **create a display**.

Poetry Slam – Have a poetry reading featuring works by National Book Festival poets.

Make a passport to the festival program. Design challenges (e.g. watch a talk from an author in an unfamiliar genre, hear from an author of color in any genre, etc.) and give away prizes for folks who complete the challenges.

Share Your Ideas with Us

Is your library or organization planning any ways to get involved with the National Book Festival and Indiana authors in your community? From watch parties to book discussions to your own creative program idea, the possibilities are endless! [Fill out this form](#) to let us know your programs, ideas and events, so we can share them.



Connect with Indiana Authors through the Indiana Authors Awards

The Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Awards honors the best books written by Indiana authors. Awarded every two years, they celebrate Indiana writers, shine a light on the Hoosier state's literary community and deepen connections between Indiana writers and readers. They were established in 2009 as a vision of Eugene and Marilyn Glick and are a vital component of Indiana Humanities' rich and diverse literary programming.



Connect with Indiana Authors through the Hoosier Toucan Interviews

Sammy the Interviewing Hoosier Toucan began interviewing writers with Indiana connections in June of 2020 as a way to highlight local authors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sammy, who can generally be found in the Indiana Young Readers Center, has talked to over 50 literary creators including poets, memoirists, nonfiction writers, children's novelists, writers for teens, illustrators and playwrights. Learn more about Indiana's writers by diving into this off-the-wall YouTube series, complete with a show-and-tell with each participant.

Useful Links

- [National Book Festival](#)
- [Indiana Young Readers Center](#)
- [Indiana Authors Awards](#)
- [Hoosier Toucan Interviews](#)
- [Great Reads from Great Places](#)