

# Children's Book Guild News



CHILDREN'S  
BOOK GUILD  
of WASHINGTON, DC

## Monthly News

Authors • Illustrators • Children's Literature Specialists

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### About Me



#### Monthly News

The Children's Book Guild of Washington, DC is a professional organization of authors, illustrators and children's literature specialists promoting high standards in children's literature since 1945. Visit us at

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## October 2021



### Upcoming October Program

*Jewell Parker Rhodes, PhD to speak about her new book*

This month, award-winning and bestselling author and educator Dr. Jewell Parker Rhodes will discuss her new book *Paradise on Fire*, a powerful

coming-of-age survival tale exploring issues of race, class and climate change. It was published last month. Dr. Rhodes will join us via Zoom at 1 pm on Thursday, October 21.

Dr. Rhodes has written seven books for children including the New York Times bestsellers *Black Brother*, *Black Brother* and *Ghost Boys*, which has won more than 30 honors and awards. Her other books include *Towers Falling* and the celebrated *Louisiana Girls Trilogy*. She is the author of six adult novels, as well as the memoir *Porch Stories: A Grandmother's Guide to Happiness* and two writing guides, *Free Within Ourselves: Fiction Lessons for Black Authors* and *The African American Guide to Writing and Publishing Non-Fiction*. Dr. Rhodes has won the American Book Award, the Black Caucus of the American Library Award for Literary Excellence, a Coretta Scott King Honor Award and the Jane Addams Peace Association Book Award.

Dr. Rhodes is a frequent speaker at colleges and conferences. The driving force behind her work is to inspire social justice, equity and environmental stewardship. Read more about her [here](#).

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Letter From Guild President, Erica Perl

Happy Fall!



First, a confession: as a native New Englander, the apples in the DC area will never be crisp enough for me (my husband describes my ideal apple as “a rock”). However, I do like sweater weather and crunchy leaves underfoot and of course new fall books (as well as new-to-you fall books... autumn is a great time to get your hands on titles you missed when they came out). I’m currently reading four books at once, which I don’t recommend if you like keeping your stories straight.

Our first speaker of the 2021-2022 season, Daniel Nayeri, was as fascinating and charming off the page as he is in his writing. Monica Valentine did a masterful job interviewing him about his life and his work. The importance of stories and storytelling was on my mind throughout his remarks, as well as when I read two recent news articles. The first was about [the recent book ban in York, PA](#) that focused on diverse books, and how it was overturned when local families – plus the kidlit community across the country – protested. This was a victorious resolution to a troubling situation... clearly, there’s still work to be done to help the world understand that diverse books benefit all children. The second article celebrated [the renewal of National Ambassador for Young People’s Literature, Jason Reynolds’ position](#) so he can travel to rural communities and connect with underserved students. Again, good news, because all kids stand to benefit from his message. As I often tell students during my school visits: books are a way writers and readers can have conversations. But story is the thing that connects us. I’m excited for our next speaker, Jewell Parker Rhodes, whose storytelling has taken her readers to some pretty incredible places.

So as we settle into fall, I hope we all find hard-as-rocks apples (if you do, tell me where they are!), cozy writing/drawing/reading nooks and stories that grab us tight and won’t let go.

Erica

**In Case You Missed our September Program...**

*A Recipe for Success: A conversation with Printz Award winning author, Daniel Nayeri*

By Sue Fliess

The Guild’s Monica Valentine interviewed Daniel Nayeri, author of many books including *Straw House*, *Wood House*, *Brick House*, *Blow: Four Novellas* and the 2021 Printz Award winning book, *Everything Sad is Untrue (a true story)*, to dig deep into Daniel’s life, work, his time as a pastry chef, and how being a refugee



changed his life. Daniel was born in Iran and spent a couple of years as a refugee with his family before immigrating to Edmond, Oklahoma. *Everything Sad is Untrue (a true story)*, published by Levine Querido in 2020, is the autobiography of Daniel as a middle school boy refugee from Iran, navigating a new world in America and trying to make sense of his life while finding purpose. Daniel describes it as a coming of age,

and we're watching the child build the tools for adulthood. It's been translated into nine languages (Daniel is anxiously awaiting Arabic or Farci).

Daniel shared his path to publication, where he described himself as always having one foot on the business side of publishing and one on the writing side. Involved with books since age 12, he knew he wanted to be a writer. In high school he got a job as a page at the Edmond, Oklahoma public library. In college he had a publishing internship on the adult side. From there he was a foreign rights agent for Carol Mann, who convinced him that he would be a better editor than negotiator. He then took a job as an editor at Harper Collins, where he described working on celebrity books in an intense environment. Departing from the editing side, he decided to become a pastry chef, but kept his foot in publishing with a copyediting job with Simon & Schuster. And when a children's publishing editorial gig opened at HMH, Clarion Books, he took it, editing many books, and was eventually approached to start an imprint, Odd Dot, which he led for four years. When *Everything Sad is Untrue* was published, he stepped full time into the author role.

Monica asked Daniel to discuss how the narrator in the book uses storytelling. Daniel said that the narrator uses storytelling as a defensive shield, as a way to connect with people, to possess the reader, to humanize himself and as the linear tissue between generations. At the heart of it, the main character is trying to connect to his family. Daniel explained the concept of taarof, or "performative self-annihilation," for the purpose of honoring someone. It's the idea that nothing is believed unless it is said or offered three times. In *Everything Sad*, Daniel has a construct that he's a guest in the reader's mind. He often breaks common rules of storytelling.

He discussed the overlapping skills he believes exist in baking, writing and editing. According to him, you make a product, but there's a point where you put it in the oven and that's the magical moment. There's still mystery and serendipity. Some happy accidents come out of both baking and writing.

Monica asked Daniel about the concept in the book of "a patchwork memory is the shame of a refugee." He said it has to do with trying to assess what the biggest tragedy is of being a refugee. Poverty makes one feel shame, he said, noting that refugees are part of the global homeless until they get asylum somewhere. And that family linearity gets severed when you become a refugee. As a refugee, Daniel had no access to his family, resulting in his patchwork memory. He says the biggest shame of being a refugee is not being claimed by anyone.

Asked if he'd been able to connect with readers about the refugee experience, he shared that due to Covid, he has not, but he has received some incredible letters from students identifying with *Everything Sad*. Daniel hopes readers will take away from the story that there are things in your life you'd give everything else up for, that you have at the top of your heart. And whatever that is, that is what you serve. The main character is for his "thing," which is also his purpose.

## **Gail Jarrow to Receive the 2022 Children's Book Guild Nonfiction Award**

**By Abby McGanney Nolan**

**Chair, Nonfiction Award Committee 2021-2022**

The Children's Book Guild of Washington has selected Gail Jarrow as the 2022 Nonfiction Award winner. The award, given annually since 1977, honors authors and author/illustrators whose body of work has contributed significantly to the quality of nonfiction for children.

Over the course of more than a dozen books for young readers, Gail has explained challenging topics including contagious diseases, medical fiascos, and hoaxes — with narrative verve, well-researched facts, and fascinating details.

Although her books have focused on historical events — including *The Poison Eaters: Fighting Danger* and *Fraud in Our Food and Drugs*, *Spooked!: How A Radio Broadcast and The War of the Worlds Sparked the 1938 Invasion of America* and *Blood and Germs: The Civil War Battle Against Wounds and Disease* — they nevertheless hold great relevance and wisdom for today's young readers. Her nonfiction books, the last ten of which have been published by Calkins Creek, are produced with appealing designs and great archival images. Many thanks to Nonfiction Award Committee members Yukari Matsuyama and Catherine Reef for careful reading and thoughtful Zoom discussions during the award decision-making process. We also appreciate the advice of Emeritus member Liane Rosenblatt.

Gail will be honored by the Children's Book Guild on May 19, 2022. Please mark your calendars, and let's hope we will be able to come together in person again to honor our winner.

**Resources: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

A reminder to Guild members to check out the list we maintain of readings related to topics of diversity, equity and inclusion. You can access it [HERE](#). We are always looking to add to the list. If you have recommendations for books, articles, videos, podcasts or other anti-racist resources, please send an email to [janeffarrington@gmail.com](mailto:janeffarrington@gmail.com) or [information.cbg@gmail.com](mailto:information.cbg@gmail.com). Thanks!

**Member News**

Joy Jones has won the 2022 PEN/Phyllis Naylor Grant for Children's and Young Adult Novelists for her MG novel-in-progress, *Walking The Boomerang*. The grant is made possible by a substantial contribution from PEN America Member and Guild member Phyllis Reynolds Naylor. The judges for the contest were noted authors: Jack Gantos, Cheryl Willis Hudson and Lois Lowry. Jones is the author of other children's books including *Tambourine Moon*, *Fearless Public Speaking* and her most recent: *Jayla Jumps In*. Phyllis is delighted that a Guild member is



this year's winner. This has happened only once before when Deborah Wiles won the award in 2004. This year marks the 20th anniversary of the [PEN/Phyllis Naylor Grant](#).

[The Nature Generation](#) (NatGen) and Salisbury University's Seidel School of Education will sponsor the EnviroKids Literacy Festival, a virtual event to be held October 7-9. The three-day festival will include a virtual, evening reception and award ceremony for NatGen's

esteemed Green Earth Book Award (GEBA) 2021 winning authors; a day-long celebration of GEBA works with teachers and K-12 school children; and a professional development workshop for educators, librarians and citizen scientists. The EnviroKids Literacy Festival seeks to inspire multiple audiences and educate others on how to foster environmental justice, literacy, and stewardship in classrooms and communities. Registration is free and open to students, educators, authors, anyone interested. For more information or to register for one, two, or three days, visit [EnviroKids Literacy Festival | Salisbury University](#).



Sue Fliess' 10th Little Golden Book was released on September 14, 2021. *I'm a Figure Skater!*, illustrated by Nina Mata and published by Random House Children's Books, follows an aspiring young figure skater from first practice through to competition.

Laura Gehl has a book coming out in October. *Who is a Scientist?*, a photo-illustrated book featuring 14 diverse scientists at work and at play (Did you know scientists love karate? And soccer? And dancing? And painting? Just like kids do!), is out from Millbrook Press (Lerner) on October 5.



Kitson Jazyka has a book coming out in October: *The Highlights Book of Things to Write*, published by Highlights Press.



Naaz Khan, from An Open Book Foundation, is excited to announce the release of her debut picture book, *Room for Everyone*, coming out October 26, 2021. Illustrated by Mercè López, the counting story in rhyme invites readers to join a young boy on a crowded bus in Zanzibar, where passengers wiggle and giggle around

to make room for everyone.

Claudia Mills' middle-grade verse novel *The Lost Language* (pub date October 19), about two sixth-grade best friends trying to save an endangered language, received a starred review from The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books. Claudia is doing a ZOOM launch event for the book, hosted by Fallen Leaf Books in Nashville, Indiana (indie bookstore owned by her sister!), on Saturday, October 23, at 1:00 ET. Click [HERE](#) to join the Zoom meeting. All are welcome!

Ginger Park's picture book manuscript *Grandpa's Scroll* was just acquired by Albert Whitman & Co. The book (to be released March 2023)



gently explores the topic of grief. Young Lily is looking forward to meeting her pen-pal grandpa who will be visiting from Korea for the very first time. Their playful letters reflect the contrasts and similarities of the worlds they live in. But when her grandpa unexpectedly dies before his trip, Lily will, instead, visit Korea and take her own journey where the pen-pals, in an artistic sense, will meet. In addition, Ginger's forthcoming children's historical novel was released for [preorder](#) in September (release date is March 25, 2022). The book was inspired by her mother's remembrances of her family's painful struggles during the Russian invasion of her hometown. It details their flight south across the 38th parallel to Seoul, just prior to the outbreak of the Korean War.



Brenda Seabrooke's new book, *The Scourge of Scorrhill Moor*, is about a strange man/wolf creature lurking on the moors. Is it just a local legend or is there more to the story? Holmes and Watson investigate in this gothic mystery.

Debra Kempf Shumaker is pleased to announce the release of *Tell Someone*, a picture book with Albert Whitman and Company, illustrated by Tristan Yuvienco. Gentle verses encourage kids to open up in good times and in bad and for problems big and small.



Susan Stockdale reports that her picture book *Spectacular Spots* will be issued as a bilingual English/Spanish board book called *Spectacular Spots/Magnificas Manchas* on October 1. In rhythmic rhyme, it brings to life a parade of spotted creatures from "gliding snails" to "singing quails."

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