

A special edition of
Lunch With Books
at the
Ohio County
Public Library
Wheeling, WV

HOSTED BY
WEST VIRGINIA
POET LAUREATE
MARC HARSHMAN

JUNE 8,
2021



*Wheeling
Poetry
Series*

PRESENTS

ANNA SMUCKER
& BILL KING

Wheeling Poetry Series

Launched in September 2015, the “**Wheeling Poetry Series**” features readings by some of the finest poets from our Appalachian region and beyond.

When he is available, **Marc Harshman**, the poet laureate of West Virginia, serves as host.

The series came about as a result of an ongoing conversation with Harshman, who felt that there was a need for a dependable venue in which to present major American poets reading and talking about their work here in West Virginia and more specifically here in Wheeling. Harshman had long lamented the loss of the **James Wright** Festival which had been held for many years in Wright’s home town of Martins Ferry, Ohio. “That annual event was a towering success,” Harshman explained, “lauded by poets across the U.S., and I see no reason why such a success cannot be replicated here in Wheeling. And some will remember that frequently some of the programming for the Wright festival was, in fact, held at various locations in Wheeling.”



George Ella Lyon, poet laureate of Kentucky, & **Marc Harshman**, poet laureate of West Virginia, at the inaugural **Wheeling Poetry Series** at Lunch With Books, September 29, 2015.

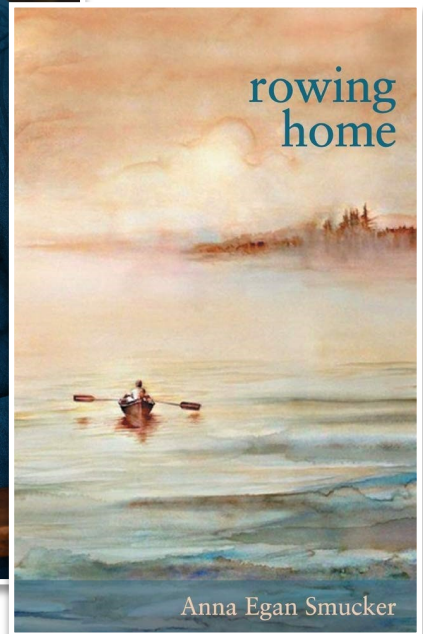
Wheeling
Poetry
Series

FEATURED GUEST... JUNE 8, 2021

ANNA SMUCKER

Anna Egan Smucker is an award-winning author of nine books. *No Star Nights*, her memoir about growing up in the steel mill town of Weirton, WV won the International Reading Association Children's Book Award. *Golden Delicious: A Cinderella Apple Story* and *Brother Giovanni's Little Reward: How the Pretzel Was Born* represented WV at the National Book Festival in D.C. *Fallingwater: The Building of Frank Lloyd Wright's Masterpiece*, co-authored with Marc Harshman, garnered starred reviews and was named an Amazon Nonfiction Book of the Month. Recipient of a WV Arts Commission Artist Fellowship Award, her poems have been published in

many anthologies and literary journals. Her first chapbook, titled *Rowing Home*, was published in 2019 by Finishing Line Press.



Visit annasmucker.com to learn more.

SACRAMENT

Impossibly thin, Angie's pizzelles
adorned cut-glass Christmas plates.
Stalks of wheat embossed the center
of the anise-flavored offerings
she pressed on family, neighbors, friends.

Turning eighty, something snapped.
Machine-like she churned them out
until counters, cupboards, overflowed.

In the hot kitchen,
her work, her body
had grown articulate:
Eat. Remember me.

—*Anna Egan Smucker*

SUMMER TWILIGHT ALONG THE OHIO

Behind the house, the iron handle of the pump
hangs, a filigree of rust.

An iridescent beetle shoulders its way
into the heart of Grandmother's perfect rose.
In the pounded dirt floor of the foundry,
Grandfather's shattered finger has turned to dust.
A train slices the town in half.

Barefoot children ride down the hard wheels
of the cannon mounted in the town square.
From the river, with the mist rising,
sounds the lowing horn of a boat
easing into the bend.

The metal box under his bed is empty.

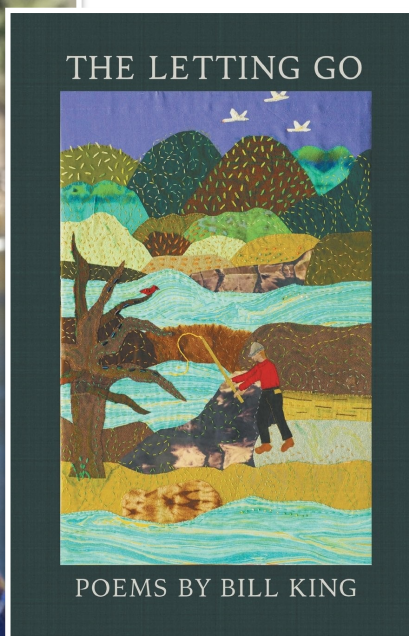
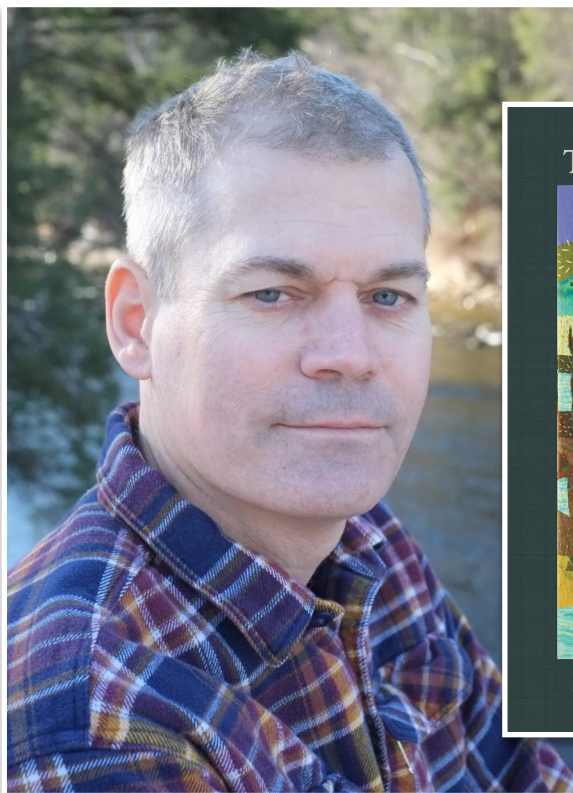
Across the street at the skating rink, a mirrored globe
hurls rainbows across the spinning floor.

— *Anna Egan Smucker*

FEATURED GUEST... JUNE 8, 2021

BILL KING

Bill King grew up outside of Roanoke, Virginia in the Blue Ridge Mountains. He holds an M.A. in Creative Writing and a Ph.D. in Literature from the University of Georgia and teaches creative writing and literature at Davis & Elkins College in Elkins, WV where he has been awarded the Lois Latham Award for Teaching Excellence. He is a Pushcart Prize nominee, and his poetry has appeared in *Kestrel*, *Appalachian Heritage*, *Still: The Journal*, *The Southern Poetry Anthology*, *Naugatuck River Review*, and many other journals and anthologies. His first chapbook of poetry, from Finishing Line Press, is *The Letting Go* (2018). Dr. King has also published critical essays on two United States Poet Laureates, Robert Penn Warren (*Mississippi Quarterly*) and Robert Hass (*Encyclopedia of American Literature*).



Visit facebook.com/BillKingPoet to learn more.

This World Should Be Enough

Walking the rails, looking out—
field daisies stand at attention,
and in the darkest hole along this long
hot stretch, a big trout rolls. It's the flash,
I guess, that catches my eye, and then
the daisies, until further below
a fierce-headed merganser
zagging up current with six behind
makes me stop: Lord, I know that this is it.
This world should be enough. But the blue pulls
my eyes skyward, then, and I am rising
above a man with everything to lose:
he's looking downriver at a thin thread of water,
lit like a slow-burning fuse.

— *Bill King*

Along the Staunton- Parkersburg Turnpike

The jonquil, buried forever
it must have seemed, in darkness,
now rise like small spears
through moss and maple leaf.
Even after the dinner bell
and shouts of children dimmed,
even as the old house fell
and its good boards were
trucked away,
the outline of little suns
continued to mark where the front
door opened like a mouth
to the mountains draped
in early morning fog.
Come late summer,
where corn once marched
toward the deep green wood,
the joepye and ironweed
will reign as tall as farm boys
waving as they go off to war—
not knowing, yet,
that they're not coming back.

— *Bill King*

PREVIOUS GUESTS

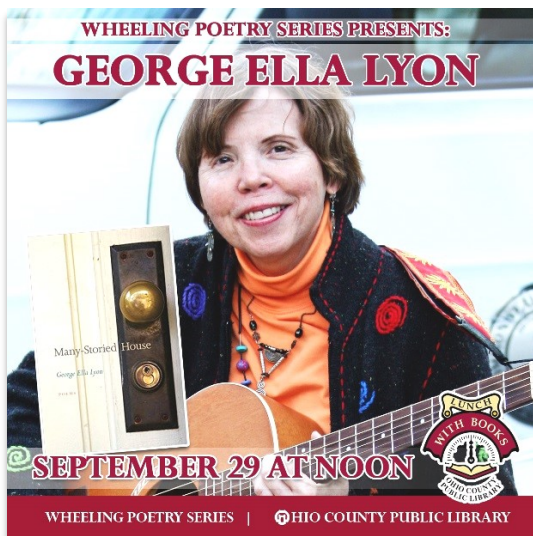
Wheeling Poetry Series

GEORGE ELLA LYON

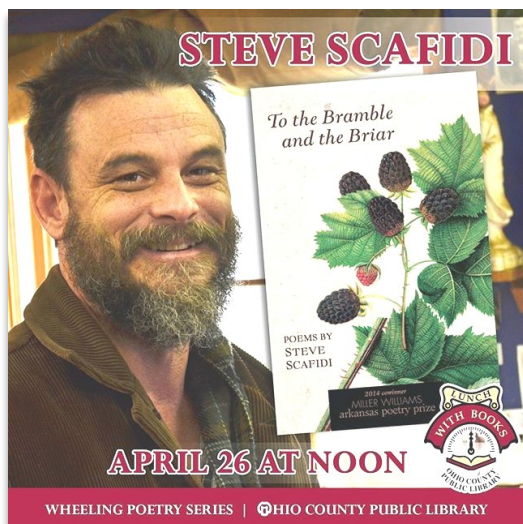
The **Wheeling Poetry Series** opener featured the poet laureate of Kentucky, **George Ella Lyon**, who appeared at Lunch With Books at the Ohio County Public Library on **September 29, 2015**.

The author of four books of poetry, a novel, a memoir, a short story collection, and thirty-seven books for young readers, Lyon read from her collection, ***Many-Storyed House***.

Originally from the mountains of Kentucky, George Ella holds a PhD in English from Indiana University, where she studied with poet Ruth Stone. She has taught writing on many campuses and spoken at hundreds of schools, libraries, and conferences throughout the country.



STEVE SCAFIDI



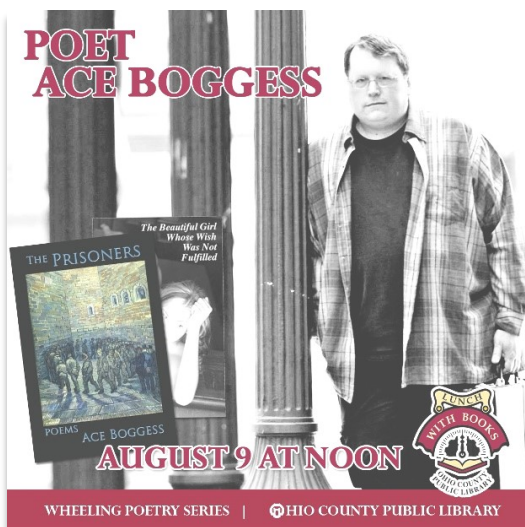
Steve Scafidi, the featured guest at the second **Wheeling Poetry Series** program on **April 26, 2016**, read *Autumn Begins in Martins Ferry Ohio* by his favorite poet, James Wright. "Wright wrote poems that endure," Scafidi said. "His poems move me—they helped me live when I was younger and they still do." From his own poems, Scafidi read ***This Page***, written for his late grandmother, ***The Coin***, a poem in which he imagines Abraham Lincoln's son Robert carrying the first Lincoln penny in his pocket, and ***Song for Sunday Morning***, a poem he dedicated to fathers everywhere.

Scafidi, who earned his MFA in creative writing at Arizona State University, lives in Summit Point, WV.

ACE BOGGESS

Our featured guest on **August 9, 2016**, Charleston native **Ace Boggress** read from his book of poetry, **The Prisoners** (Brick Road Poetry Press, 2014). Ace has also published **The Beautiful Girl Whose Wish Was Not Fulfilled** (Highwire Press, 2003). His novel, **A Song Without a Melody**, was published in December 2016 by Hyperborea Publishing.

His writing has appeared in **Harvard Review**, **Mid-American Review**, **RATTLE**, **River Styx**, **North Dakota Quarterly** and many other journals. He earned his law degree from the West Virginia University College of Law, received a fellowship from the West Virginia Commission on the Arts, and spent five years in West Virginia prison system (the basis for his latest book of poems).



POET
ACE BOGGESS

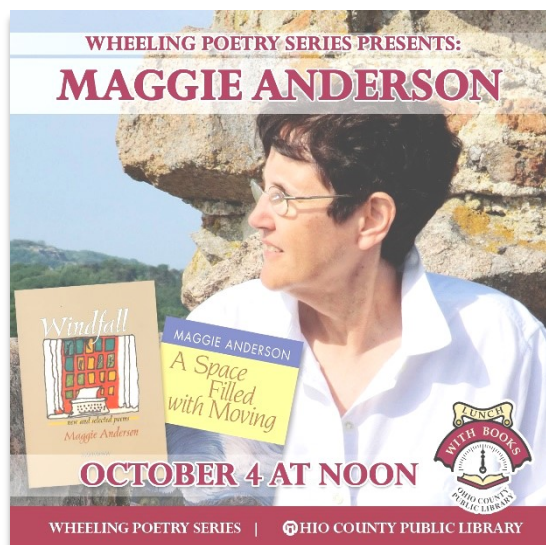
The Beautiful Girl Whose Wish Was Not Fulfilled
THE PRISONERS
POEMS
ACE BOGGESS

AUGUST 9 AT NOON

WHEELING POETRY SERIES | @HIO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

WITH BOOKS
OHIO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

MAGGIE ANDERSON



WHEELING POETRY SERIES PRESENTS:
MAGGIE ANDERSON

Windfall
new and selected poems
Maggie Anderson

MAGGIE ANDERSON
A Space Filled with Moving

OCTOBER 4 AT NOON

WHEELING POETRY SERIES | @HIO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

WITH BOOKS
OHIO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Maggie Anderson, the featured **Wheeling Poetry Series** guest **October 4, 2016**, is the author of four books of poetry, including **Windfall: New and Selected Poems**, **A Space Filled with Moving**, and **Cold Comfort**.

Her awards include two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, fellowships from the Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania Councils on the Arts, and the Ohioana Library Award for contributions to the literary arts in Ohio.

The founding director of the Wick Poetry Center and of the Wick Poetry Series of the Kent State University Press, Anderson

is Professor Emerita of English at Kent State University and lives in Asheville, NC. Her new collection of poems, **Dear All**, was released September 2017, by Four Way Books in New York.

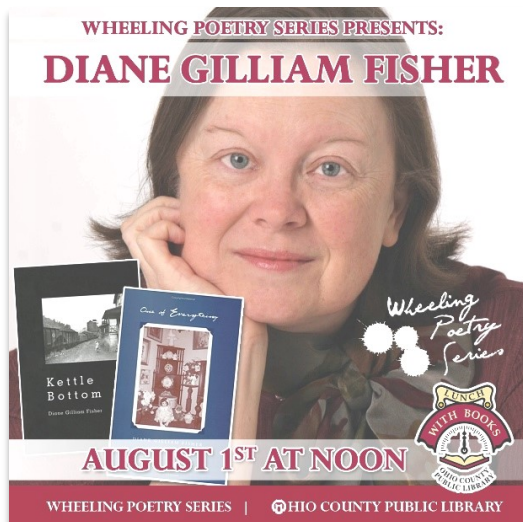
MITCHELL DOUGLAS

Our featured guest on **May 9, 2017**, **Mitchell Douglas** read from his poetry collection **\blak\ \al-fə bet** (Persea Books, 2013). Mitchell Douglas is a founding member of the Affrilachian Poets, a Cave Canem fellow, and Poetry Editor for **PLUCK!: the Journal of Affrilachian Arts & Culture**. A professor of English at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), his second poetry collection **\blak\ \al-fə bet**, was winner of the 2011 Lexi Rudnitsky/Editor's Choice Award. His debut collection, **Cooling Board: A Long-Playing Poem**, was a runner-up for the 2007 Stan and Tom Wick Poetry Prize. In 2010, **Cooling Board** was nominated for an NAACP Image Award in the Outstanding Literary Work-Poetry.



DIANE GILLIAM

Diane Gilliam grew up in Columbus, Ohio, daughter of parents who were part of the post-war Appalachian outmigration, from Mingo County W. Va. and Johnson County Kentucky. Gilliam's first book, **One of Everything** (2003), tells the stories of four generations of women in her family, beginning on Stepp Mountain in eastern Kentucky and ending in a shopping mall in Akron, Ohio.



Her second book, **Kettle Bottom** (2004), a Pushcart Prize winner and Ohioana Library Association Book of the Year in Poetry, showcases the voices of people living in the coal camps at the time of the 1920-21 West Virginia Mine Wars. Gilliam was awarded the 2008 Chaffin Award for Appalachian Writing. She earned a PhD from Ohio State and MFA from Warren Wilson University.

Diane Gilliam was the featured **Wheeling Poetry Series** guest **August 1, 2017**.

JAMES HARMS

James Harms, was our featured guest on **October 3, 2017**. The founding director of the MFA Program in Creative Writing at WVU, Harms the author of the poetry collections *Rowing with Wings*, *Comet Scar*, *After West*, *Freeways and Aqueducts*, *Quarters*, *The Joy Addict and Modern Ocean*, and *What to Borrow*, *What to Steal*, a limited fine press edition, East of Avalon, as well as several poetry chapbooks. He has received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, three Pushcart Prizes, the PEN/Revson Fellowship, and fellowships from the WV and PA Arts Commissions, as well as residencies at Yaddo and the MacDowell Colony. His work has appeared in *Poetry*, *The American Poetry Review*, *Oxford American*, and many other journals.



MARY B. MOORE

An astounding writer and teacher, **Mary B. Moore** has published three major collections and won four poetry contests in just the past two years. Her life's work has been hailed by some of the finest poets in America.

The featured **Wheeling Poetry Series** guest **April 10, 2018**, Moore's latest poetry book, *Amanda and the Man Soul*, was selected by Dorianne Laux for the 2017 EMRYS award. Other recently published poetry books include her second full-length collection *Flicker* (Broadkill River Press, 2016), winner of the 2016 Dogfish Head Poetry Award judged by Carol Frost, Baron Wormser, and Jan Beatty; and *Eating the Light* (Sable Books, 2016) chosen by Allison Joseph for the 2016 chapbook contest. *The Book of Snow*, a full-length collection, came out in 1998 from Cleveland State University Press. She won the Second Place Award, in 2017, in Nimrod's Pablo Neruda Poetry Contest.



RON HOUCHIN AND A. E. STRINGER

On **July 17th, 2018**, the Wheeling Poetry Series hosted an astounding writer and teacher, **Ron Houchin**. In the past two years alone, Houchin has published three major collections and won four poetry contests. His life's work has been hailed by some of the finest poets in America. He was awarded the Appalachian book of the year in poetry in 2004 and the Weatherford Award in poetry in 2013 for his collection, *The Man Who Saws Us In Half*, LSU Press.

As a special bonus, the distinguished author and poet, **A.E. Stringer**, joined Houchin. Stringer taught writing and literature at Marshall University for nearly twenty-five years. The A.E. Stringer Visiting Writers Series at Marshall is named in his honor. He has published three major collections of poetry including *Channel Markers* from the legendary Wesleyan Poetry Series and most recently, *Late Breaking*, 2013, Salmon Poetry Publishing.

Wheeling Poetry Series

RON HOUCHIN

WITH SPECIAL GUEST
A. E. STRINGER

JULY 17TH AT NOON

WHEELING POETRY SERIES | OHIO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

ED OCHESTER AND JUDITH VOLLMER

Wheeling Poetry Series

ED OCHESTER & JUDITH VOLLMER

OCTOBER 9TH AT NOON

WHEELING POETRY SERIES | OHIO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

One of America's most distinguished poets, **Ed Ochester**, along with the award-winning and prolific poet, **Judith Vollmer**, kicked off the fourth season of the Wheeling Poetry Series on **October 9th, 2019**.

Ochester's book, *Sugar Run Road*, was published by Autumn House Press. He is the editor of the University of Pittsburgh Press Poetry Series and for many years was a member of the core faculty of the Bennington MFA Writing Seminars. He was formerly director of the Writing Program at the University of Pittsburgh.

Vollmer is the author of five full-length books of poetry, including most recently, *The Apollonia Poems*, awarded the Four Lakes Poetry Prize of the University of Wisconsin Press. She teaches in the Drew University MFA Program in Poetry & Poetry in Translation.

JOHN HODGEN

John Hodgen is the Writer-in-Residence at Assumption College in Worcester, MA. Hodgen won the AWP Donald Hall Prize in Poetry for Grace (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005). His fourth book of poetry, **Heaven & Earth Holding Company**, is out from University of Pittsburgh Press, and his first book **In My Father's House**, has just been reprinted from Lynx House/University of Washington Press.

A recent poem was selected for Scribner's Best American Poetry 2017. Hodgen's latest book, **The Lord of Everywhere**, was released in early September 2019, also from the University of Washington.

Hodgen was the featured author at the Wheeling Poetry Series **April 23, 2019**.

JOHN HOPPENTHALER

John Hoppenthaler was the featured guest at the Wheeling Poetry Series, **August 13, 2019**.

Hoppenthaler is the author of three books of poetry, **Lives of Water**, **Anticipate the Coming Reservoir**, and **Domestic Garden**, all with Carnegie Mellon University Press. His poetry has appeared in *Ploughshares*, *McSweeney's*, *Blackbird*, and *The Literary Review*, as well as in several anthologies, including *Eyes Glowing at the Edge of the Woods: Fiction and Poetry From West Virginia* (WVUP, 2017).

For nine years he served as Personal Assistant to American novelist, essayist, book editor, and college professor, Toni Morrison. He received his MFA in Poetry Writing from Virginia Commonwealth University and is an English professor at East Carolina University.

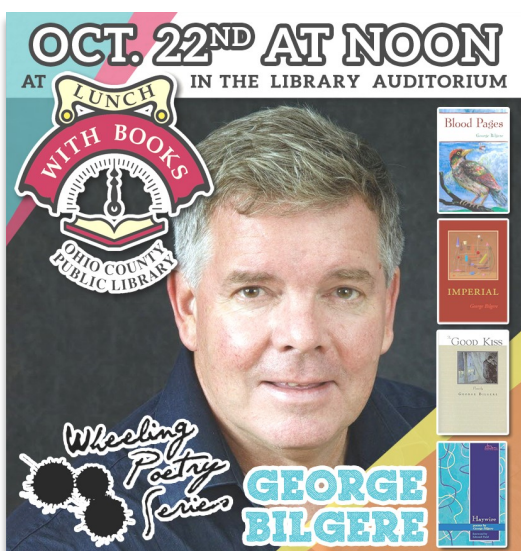
The poster features a portrait of John Hodgen, a man with a mustache wearing a green jacket over a plaid shirt. The background is a brick wall. Text on the poster includes: "LUNCH WITH BOOKS" in a circular logo, "OHIO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY", "Wheeling Poetry Series" in a script font, "JOHN HODGEN" in large blue letters, "In My Father's House" by John Hodgen, "Heaven & Earth Holding Company" by John Hodgen, "APRIL 23RD AT NOON" in large blue letters, "IN THE LIBRARY AUDITORIUM", and "WHEELING POETRY SERIES | OHIO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY" at the bottom.

The poster features a portrait of John Hoppenthaler, a man with a grey beard wearing a black shirt. The background is a light blue wall. Text on the poster includes: "LUNCH WITH BOOKS" in a circular logo, "OHIO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY", "Wheeling Poetry Series" in a script font, "JOHN HOPPENTHALER" in large white letters, "domestic garden" by John Hoppenthaler, "LIVES OF WATER" by John Hoppenthaler, "AUGUST 13TH AT NOON" in large white letters, "AT LUNCH WITH BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY AUDITORIUM", and "WHEELING POETRY SERIES | OHIO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY" at the bottom.

GEORGE BILGERE

Hailed by Michael Heaton, features reporter for *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* as "America's Greatest Living Poet," **George Bilgere** can count among his other admirers Garrison Keillor and former poet laureate Billy Collins, who has described him as "a welcome breath of fresh American air."

A professor of English at John Carroll University, Bilgere has published six collections of poetry, including **Imperial** (2014); **The White Museum** (2010), which was awarded the Autumn House Poetry Prize; **Haywire** (2006), which won the May Swenson Poetry Award; and **The Good Kiss** (2002), which was selected by Collins to win the University of Akron Poetry Award. Other awards include the Midland Authors Award and a Pushcart Prize. Bilgere was the featured author at the Wheeling Poetry Series **October 22, 2019**.



ALLISON PITINII DAVIS

Allison Pitinii Davis, the author of *Line Study of a Motel Clerk* (Baobab Press, 2017), a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award and the Ohioana Book Award, and *Poppy Seeds* (Kent State UP, 2013), winner of the Wick Poetry Chapbook Prize, marked our return to the Wheeling Poetry Series via Lunch With Books Livestream, **October 10, 2020**. Her work has appeared in *Best American Poetry*, *The New Republic*, *The Academy of American Poets* website, and elsewhere.

She holds fellowships from Stanford University's Wallace Stegner program, the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, and the Severinghaus Beck Fund for Study at Vilnius Yiddish Institute. Originally from Youngstown, Ohio, she is a PhD candidate in English and Creative Writing at The University of Tennessee, where she served as an editor of *Grist: A Journal of the Literary Arts* and writes about the intersection of labor, diaspora, and gender in the Rust Belt.



ERIN MURPHY

Our guest for the **November 11, 2020** Lunch With Books Livestream Wheeling Poetry Series, **Erin Murphy** is the author of eight collections of poetry, including **Human Resources** (forthcoming from Salmon Poetry in 2021) and **Too Much of This World** (Mammoth Books, 2008), winner of the Anthony Piccione Poetry Prize, and Science of Desire (Word Poetry, 2004), a finalist for the Paterson Poetry Prize for the best poetry book of 2004. Her awards include the Dorothy Sargent Rosenberg Poetry Prize and the Foley Poetry Award, among others. Her work has been featured on Garrison Keillor's *The Writer's Almanac*, and has appeared in numerous journals and anthologies. Murphy is Professor of English and creative writing at Penn State Altoona.



CAMERON BARNETT

Cameron Barnett's poetry explores the complexity of race and the body for a black man in today's America. His work has been nominated for a 2016 Pushcart Prize, the 82nd Annual Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards, and the Rebekah Johnson Bobbitt Prize. He is the recipient of a 2019 Investing in Professional Artists Grant Program, a partnership of The Pittsburgh Foundation and The Heinz Endowments; he is also the 2019 Emerging Artist Awardee for the Carol R. Brown Creative Achievement Awards, co-sponsored by The Pittsburgh Foundation and The Heinz Endowments. He is the author of **The Drowning Boy's Guide to Water**, winner of the Autumn House Press 2017 Rising Writer Contest, and finalist for the 49th NAACP Image Awards for Outstanding Literary Work in Poetry. Cameron joins us for the sixteenth program in the Wheeling Poetry series via Lunch With Books Livestream, March 9, 2021.



Wheeling Poetry Series

"I have a great faith in poetry to refocus in us what it means to be human, and with every passing year I feel an ever greater need to be reminded about what it is that we hold in common as men and women who value beauty and the kind of meaning revealed in artistic expression. I am not embarrassed to continue to quote as immensely relevant **William Carlos Williams'** adage that :

***' It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.'***

In a political season that seems more sad and pathetic than ever before, perhaps the news that may be found in poetry will hold a brightness, a freshness more useful than the sound-bites from talking heads reporting on the doings of the millionaires and corporate figure heads dominating what currently passes for news here in America."

-Marc Harshman, West Virginia Poet Laureate

NEXT

Wheeling Poetry Series

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

LUNCH WITH BOOKS
OHIO COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
LIVE

LUSCIOUS STRUGGLE
Carrie Conners

The Land of the Dead is Open for Business
Jacob Strautmann

Wheeling Poetry Series

JULY 27TH AT NOON
AT LUNCH WITH BOOKS LIVESTREAM - ONLINE

Carrie Conners & **Jacob Strautmann** will be our guests for our next Wheeling Poetry Series, July 27, 2021. Originally from West Virginia, **Carrie Conners** first poetry collection, *Luscious Struggle* was selected as a 2020 Paterson Poetry Prize Finalist. Her second collection, *Species of Least Concern*, was a finalist of the Main Street Rag Poetry Book Award and will be published in the winter of 2021-22. Awarded a 2018 Massachusetts Poetry Fellowship, Marshall County native **Jacob Strautmann's** debut book of poems *The Land of the Dead Is Open for Business* is currently available from Four Way Books.

NOTES

Wheeling Poetry Series



www.ohiocountylibrary.org