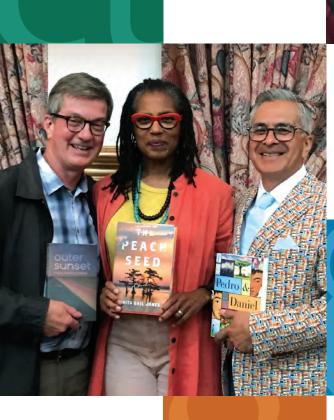




Poets&Writers







A N N U A L R E P O R T JULY 1, 2022–JUNE 30, 2023



The mission of Poets & Writers is to foster the professional development of poets and writers, to promote communication throughout the literary community, and to help create an environment in which literature can be appreciated by the widest possible public.

This year writers turned to us, as they have for decades, for trustworthy guidance, encouragement, and validation. They looked to the pages of *Poets & Writers Magazine* to learn about the work of other writers, and to discover the scores of literary organizations and publications that make up the vibrant national literary scene. They visited our website to find insight into the art of writing, to research markets for their work, and to connect with other writers.

New initiatives expanded access and helped writers build thriving creative lives. Get the Word Out provided an in-depth publicity incubator for early career writers; Mapping the Maze introduced hundreds to the fundamentals of how to get published; and Poets & Writers Groups—our online platform for connection, collaboration, and community—continued to grow.

We remain committed to becoming an antiracist organization. In all that we do, we work to advance equity and elevate historically marginalized voices. We are especially proud to serve the writing community during this time of increasing book bans and other efforts to censor, silence, and demonize writers—efforts often aimed at writers of color and queer writers. Thankfully, despite these poisonous efforts, there has been a superbloom of creativity, with dazzling new voices emerging all over the landscape.

It is a joy to contribute to the vitality and diversity of this lush landscape. We are deeply grateful to our dedicated staff and board members, and to the generous donors who make our work possible.

Alum Grade Morthy S. Kels

Melissa Ford Gradel Executive Director

Willys Schneider Kals President of the Board of Directors





OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

Years since Poets & Writers was founded:	
Issues of Poets & Writers Magazine published:	6
Readers of each issue of Poets & Writers Magazine:	100,000
Complimentary copies of <i>Poets & Writers Magazine</i> distributed to writing programs, conferences, and events and through free subscriptions to high school-age writers and their teachers:	4,000
Unique visitors to our website, pw.org:	
Carefully vetted, free online databases on pw.org:	
Total writing contests, literary magazines, small presses, and more listed in these databases:	2,870
Writers active in Poets & Writers Groups, our peer-to-peer networking platform on pw.org:	2,300
Writers groups they have formed:	180
Authors with profiles in the Poets & Writers Directory:	13,000
Writers who attended Mapping the Maze, an online workshop that helps writers chart a path to publication:	328
Writers who participated in Get the Word Out, a publicity incubator for early career poets and fiction writers:	_20
Percentage of these writers who identify as BIPOC:	
Writers who received Readings & Workshops mini-grants:	
Percentage of these writers who identify as BIPOC:	
Dollars distributed to these writers:	267,000
Literary events these writers participated in with our support:	1,600
Audience members who attended these events:	93,000
Community-building gatherings hosted for writers and literary presenters in California and New York State:	
Writers from Iowa who received the Maureen Egen Writers Exchange Award in 2023:	2
Dollars awarded to Sandra Lim, winner of the 2023 Jackson Poetry Prize:	.85,000
Staff members who made all this happen:	23

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ENT ETIQUETTE 101 • HOW TO READ AN AGENCY AGREEMENT

dventures With nderstanding How They Think and Worknd What to Do When They Say No (or Maybe) Faiardo-

Keeping the Stories

First Fiction 2022

Introducing Leila Mottley, Tsering Yangzom Lama, Paige Clark, Arinze Ifeakandu, and Morgan Talty

Going Solo Selling Your Book Without an Agent

Spotlight on Ukrainian Literature in Translation

Celebrating Debut Poets Age Seventy and Over

Celeste Ng Our Missing Hearts A Writing Practice 5 Over 50 Debut Authors Carmen Giménez Graywolf's New Publisher Þ Det riters OV/DEC 2022 °51/

The author of Inciting Joy talks with Aimee Nezhukumatathil about curiosity and collaboration

Publishing Spotlight: Literary Magazines Interviews With Editors, Getting Paid for Your Work, Considering Response Times, How to Navigate

the Editing Process, and More

Working With an Independent Publicist as a Small Press Author

Freedom Reads Writing Prompt

Contest Deadli ecent Winner

ESSAYS BY DAVID SEDARIS, VALERIA LUISELLI, AND SARA NOVIĆ

oetso ers



"I don't want to tell you what happened. I want to tell you how it felt."

A WRITER'S EDUCATION

Belonging and the MFA, Application Advice, Making the Most of Workshops, a Year of Craft Reading, and More

THE NEW NONFICTION

Elamin Abdelmahmoud, Lars Horn, Chloé Cooper Jones, Putsata Reang, and Prince Shakur

MY LIFE IN BOOK BANNING Jonathan Evison Confronts a Campaign of Threats and Protests in the Post-Truth Era

AGENTS & EDITORS Annie Hwang of Ayesha Pande Literary "There was something for me a bit lonely when I started out writing, and Poets & Writers Magazine became a kind of companion. It was the magazine that introduced me to how publishing works. It was the magazine that reported what other people had won, which for me was a source of inspiration because I saw what was possible."

THE INSPIRATION ISSUE START DREAMING: IDEAS FOR

BEST-SELLING AUTHOR CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE

> TAX TIPS FOR WRITERS: SAVE MONEY WHILE PLAYING BY THE RULES MARCH/APRIL 2023

LUIS ALBERTO URREA ADVICE FROM HOW TO READ YOUR CAMILLE T. DUNGY CONTEST JUDGES BOOK CONTRACT

Poets & Writers

WRITING PROMPTS

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Unshuttered

Writers Retreats

AN/FEB 2023 ers

> Award-Winning Residencies, How to Prepare for Your Time Away, Tips for Surviving a Toxic Workshop

Letting Go w One Author Found Agent After Giving Up

Agents & Editors Clark of Mariner Books on Vriters Can Shine in a Query Letter

> Samiya Bashir of Lambda Literary

Writing Prompts **Contest Deadlines**



Start Dreaming A Sea of Ideas for the Year of Writing Ahead

-11



Talks about community building, professional burnout, the questions writers should ask when querying agents, and the demanding work of advocating for diversity in publishing. Surf Feengisolwayshinking about the former. This sport/because on appect of hey as an agent, and the community - expecting the structure of the community of the structure of the structu

IN HIS NEW ESSAY COLLECTION, INCITING JOY, PRIZE-WINNING POET AND AUTHOR ROSS GAY TURNS OUR ATTENTION TO WHAT BRINGS US TOGETHER, EXTOLLING THE PLEASURES OF COLLABORATION AND THE RECOGNITION OF WHAT CONNECTS US RATHER THAN DIVIDES US.

Seeds to share as mere data fease in the wind on the same as the same data fease

in the middle of the Community through the same at do-with the nonlable categories as good at time as I mery years ago through one dear murual friende, Patrick Roady, hwy, along with Roas, shaped the more chilarating reading 142 with Roas, shaped the more huik Rwading, Beld is fast been approximately been reaches-featuring daracting Girmany, Teshinab Jesa, hang samah feeling good go nin patrian as first read 2005) a consolidation of the same three the Roas's debar collection, Aginar White (Casan Kerry, Just who, for yours cating:

porcal clearse. Joss, and "The Truth," as one of the opensis the site look was titled, in ways Truth, "as one of the seen before, seeningly unarfaid and unabalied, with a table of countingly unarfaid and unabalied, with worms, between the featured bodily drips, sight, my peer, those we had similar pop calored the was points? I do we had similar pop calored the true points? I now how common drive reference using wass, for me—but here, finally, was a poet my fie soil, and the hear theses of people's around him, who didn't final whom saving draws around him,

BY AIMEE NEZHUKUMATATHIL PHOTOGRAPHS BY NATASHA KOMODA

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Poets & Writers Magazine is the North Star for writers nationwide.

In its pages, writers discover trustworthy guidance, professional opportunities, and inspiration to catalyze their creativity and advance their careers. The six issues published this year celebrated the nation's rich and varied literary voices with in-depth profiles on authors Camille T. Dungy, Ross Gay, Celeste Ng, Namwali Serpell, Patricia Smith, Luis Alberto Urrea, and Kate Zambreno. We featured special sections on literary agents, a writer's education, literary magazines, inspiration, writers retreats, and writing contests. To relaunch our popular Agents & Editors series with a focus on BIPOC publishing professionals, we engaged Vivian Lee, senior editor at Little, Brown, to interview Annie Hwang, an agent with Ayesha Pande Literary, and Rakia Clark, executive editor of Mariner Books. Essays by Valeria Luiselli, Carl Phillips, David Sedaris, and Esmé Weijun Wang explored the literary life, and articles on book contracts, taxes, self-publishing, working with a publicist, selling your book without an agent, and writing freelance reviews provided practical advice writers need.

To inspire the next generation of writers, we launched an initiative to provide free subscriptions to high school students in partnership with groups that recognize achievement in young writers, as well as to high school creative writing teachers for classroom use.

"It was an article in Poets & Writers Magazine that changed my life, and Poets & Writers continues to do that."

BEST-SELLING AUTHOR MARLON JAMES



Our website, pw.org, is an essential anchor for the literary community the go-to hub where creative writers discover information and forge connections.

The site provides any writer with an internet connection free access to a wealth of resources, tools, and editorial coverage related to the business and craft of creative writing. The 1.5 million users who visit the site each year discover select articles from *Poets & Writers Magazine* and online series like Craft Capsules, Writers Recommend, Agents & Editors Recommend, and Ten Questions.

Among the most frequently visited areas of pw.org are our carefully curated and vetted databases of Grants & Awards, Literary Magazines, Small Presses, and more that connect writers to opportunities and help hundreds of literary publications and organizations nationwide reach their constituents. The Poets & Writers Directory provides a prestigious professional credential to the more than 13,000 published writers listed.

Poets & Writers Groups is an online networking platform for writers to find community. Writers can connect, communicate, and collaborate with other writers—all in one place. P&W Groups leverages our long-standing role as the literary community's primary nexus to help writers achieve their shared goals. Writers get started by creating a quick and easy profile that includes information about their writing, publishing, and workshop experience, and the type of writers group they are looking for—whether for encouragement, critique, generative writing, or accountability partners. Writers can then search for an existing group to join, or create a group specifically tailored to their needs and invite others to join. Members can use the platform to chat with writers in their group, message writers outside of their group, share documents for critique, organize a calendar for meetings, and access live video conferencing. Since Poets & Writers Groups launched in 2021, more than 2,300 writers have joined and more than 180 writers groups have formed.



CONNECTING WITH WRITERS ONLINE

Weekly Update e-newsletter subscribers:	84,000
The Time Is Now writing prompt subscribers:	22,000
Facebook followers:	422,000
X (formerly known as Twitter) followers:	273,000
Instagram followers:	43,000

Pw.org is supported, in part, by the National Endowment for the Arts.

"I was able to start my own group for short-form flash nonfiction and I was invited into another group for essay writers by a longer standing group. So far, it's been great for me, and I was very active in putting it into use. I think having the Poets & Writers name attached set a certain standard, which I wanted in searching for other writers."

POETS & WRITERS GROUPS USER





"Joining Poets & Writers Groups has been absolutely transformative. I am in an intimate group of four writers that meets monthly, and the members have come to mean a great deal to me. It makes me feel part of a writerly community, and it has made a huge difference in my writing. I write for them, and I can't wait to share my writing at each workshop."

POETS & WRITERS GROUPS USER



Credit: Heather Jacobs



Mapping the Maze centers the concerns of BIPOC writers. To that end, presenters have included prominent BIPOC authors and publishing professionals, like poet Abayomi Animashaun (left).

"I've submitted one manuscript and am revising another thanks to this workshop's utility and encouragement."



"The workshop has given me a road map this is huge."

MAPPING THE MAZE PARTICIPANT

MAPPING THE MAZE

"These workshops demystified the process while connecting me with other poets/writers who are where I am. I felt the support and encouragement of the P&W staff, especially as a woman of color."

MAPPING THE MAZE PARTICIPANT

Vivian Lee (below), senior editor at Little, Brown, was a featured presenter in this year's Mapping the Maze workshops.



Credit: Brian Braganzo



Poet Brittany Rogers (above) was a featured presenter in this year's Mapping the Maze workshops.

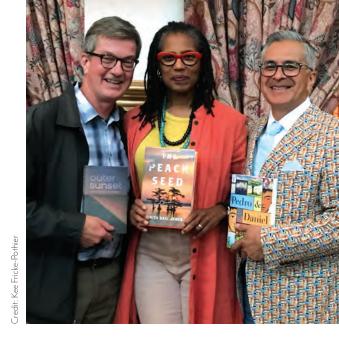
Mapping the Maze is an online orientation to getting published, illuminating pathways through a process that can seem opaque and impenetrable.

This year, 328 writers took part in Mapping the Maze. Poets & Writers staff share insight distilled from decades of helping authors navigate the marketplace; editors from literary journals, independent presses, and major publishing houses describe how to submit work for publication; literary agents break down how to write a query and what to expect of the agent-author relationship; and established authors share stories, both inspirational and cautionary, from their varied journeys to publication.

Mapping the Maze is intended for writers who have spent time developing their craft and are

now ready to reach readers. In keeping with Poets & Writers' commitment to becoming an antiracist organization, the workshop centers the concerns of writers of color. This year, 71 percent of workshop presenters were BIPOC-identified. They included literary agents such as Regina Brooks and Julia Kardon; editors Vivian Lee (Little, Brown), Anitra Budd (Coffee House Press), Rakia Clark (Mariner Books), and Nadxieli Nieto (Flatiron Books); and authors John Keene, Megan Fernandes, and Jonathan Escoffery. To ensure broad access to the program, we offered fee waivers to more than 30 percent of attendees, with priority given to BIPOC writers.





Introducing a book to the reading public is a moment of great potential. Get the Word Out is a publicity incubator that helps writers take full advantage of the opportunity.

In its inaugural year, the incubator welcomed ten fiction writers and ten poets, each with their first book forthcoming. Lauren Cerand, a publicist with more than twenty years of publicity, communications, and marketing experience, led the fiction cohort and Morgan LaRocca, senior publicist at Milkweed Editions, worked with the poets. Each author developed a strategic publicity plan to maximize the exposure of their book, reach readers, and create a platform to propel their literary careers.

Get the Word Out aims to support strong literary voices nationwide and provide a boost to writers who might not otherwise have access to in-depth publicity support. To that end, the program prioritizes applications from writers who identify as BIPOC, writers with disabilities, LGBTQ+ writers, writers from outside of New York City, and writers whose books are slated to be published by independent presses. Eighty percent of the authors selected for Get the Word Out this year identified as BIPOC; 95 percent were publishing with independent or university presses; they hailed from states throughout the country, including Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, and Virginia. There is no fee for participants.

Get the Word Out has already had a transformative impact on writers. Ada Zhang, a participant in the fiction cohort, was selected as a 5 Under 35 honoree by the National Book Foundation for her short story collection, *The Sorrows of Others*. Federico Erebia's novel, *Pedro & Daniel*, was featured on NPR's *Weekend Edition*. Magogodi oaMphela Makhene's story collection, *Innards*, received a rave review in the *New York Times*. These are just a few examples among the many successes of the authors who have taken part.



Left, from left: Get the Word Out alumni Mark Ernest Pothier, Anita Gail Iones, and Federico Erebia. 6

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"The program met my goals and expectations completely by showing me that a book's publicity journey is not ultimately about the publicity for this one book but about establishing oneself in preparation for what is hopefully a long career. In this long view of publicity, no hit is too small, no piece or person irrelevant, because it all accumulates into resources and a reputation that you take with you into the future. The program put me and the book in touch with the world, and I'm doing my best now to make the most of those connections."

GET THE WORD OUT PARTICIPANT

Books published this year by Get the Word Out alumni: Innards (W. W. Norton & Company) by Magogodi oaMphela Makhene; Heirloom (Write Bloody Publishing) by Ashia Ajani; Company (Graywolf Press) by Shannon Sanders; Ghost::Seeds (Texas Review Press) by Sebastian Merrill; and The Sorrows of Others (Public Space Books) by Ada Zhang.





Romaine Washington (right) was among the hundreds of writers who received direct support and encouragment from the Readings & Workshop program.



Readings & Workshops supported more than 1,600 events this year—including this New York City poetry reading. "To make poetry freely and easily accessible to all, the support of organizations such as Poets & Writers is indispensable."

READINGS & WORKSHOPS MINI-GRANT RECIPIENT

"Today's reading left me feeling inspired and ready for the next opportunity. Poets & Writers' support is so important in cultivating new artists and reassuring them that what they do matters."



Readings & Workshops mini-grant recipient Brennan DeFrisco (above) led a poetry workshop at the Redwood Poetry Festival in Eureka, California.



The Readings & Workshops program offers mini-grants to writers giving readings and leading writing workshops in community-based settings ranging from bookstores to national parks, from public libraries to health care facilities.

This year alone, the program distributed \$267,000 to 880 writers participating in 1,600 literary events that reached a combined audience of more than 93,000.

"It never occurred to me that there would be a group of writers, also associated with cultural institutions, who are as passionate about diversity and inclusion as I am. I think I've 'found my people.'" pay a writer participating in a literary reading or teaching a creative writing workshop. Mini-grants go directly to the writer as payment for their participation. Readings & Workshops fosters literary programming in big cities and small towns throughout California, New York State, and in Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Seattle, New Orleans, Tucson, and Washington, D.C. We also host community-building gatherings where writers and literary presenters share news and resources, exchange ideas and expertise, make connections, and form partnerships.

Any organization, group, or series can apply to

Readings & Workshops is supported, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the California Arts Council, and the Cowles Charitable Trust.

Endowed by John and Susan Jackson, the Jackson Poetry Prize is one of the most generous awards for an American poet. Sandra Lim, the 2023 winner, was awarded \$85,000.



Sandra Lim (above) reads her work at the National Arts Club.

In identifying Lim as the seventeenth winner of the prize, the judges issued a citation that reads, in part:

"It's tempting to think of Sandra Lim as a philosopher poet, in the school of Marcus Aurelius—her poems address the conundrum of being a self with fears and feelings in spite of the mortality that should in theory put us at ease. Wielding a striking combination of cool detachment and sly humor, Lim constantly points to the mundane aspects of the world and to how we nevertheless cling to them, always expecting something more. ...Lim confronts the larger, defining abstractions of our lives—love, death, betrayal, the power dynamics of body and soul—in poems that ultimately defy easy category, refuse expectation, and have quietly challenged and reinvigorated the possibilities for what a poem can do, and how. It's a poetry of interrogation, whose fierceness lies, paradoxically, in its quiet steadiness and precision."

Below, from left: Susan Jackson with Jackson Poetry Prize winners Patricia Spears Jones (2017), Sandra Lim (2023), and John Yau (2018).



"I like thinking of the money as something that helps create space for the imagination—for delicious moments of license and immunity," said Lim when interviewed by the Boston Globe on the impact of the Jackson Poetry Prize. "I know that whatever it is I do with it, it will somehow serve the next poem, or poems," she said.

Awarded annually by Poets & Writers, the Jackson Poetry Prize recognizes an American poet of exceptional talent. Lim was selected by three esteemed judges who are each a previous recipient of the prize: Joy Harjo, Carl Phillips, and John Yau.

In June, Poets & Writers hosted a reading and reception in Lim's honor at the National Arts Club in New York City.





2022 Writers Exchange Award winners Kate Gaskin (left) and Gene Kwak (right).

MAUREEN EGEN WRITERS EXCHANGE AWARD

The Maureen Egen Writers Exchange Award aims to provide promising writers a network for professional advancement. This unique prize offers early career writers the opportunity to meet with leading agents, editors, authors, and other literary professionals.

Each year, Poets & Writers selects one state (or Washington, D.C.) and invites writers from that jurisdiction to apply. Winners establish new professional contacts and gain insight and advice—about writing, publishing, and marketing. In addition, they are invited to participate in a one-month residency at the Jentel Artist Residency Program in Banner, Wyoming. The winners of the 2022 Writers Exchange Award were Nebraska writers **Kate Gaskin** for poetry and **Gene Kwak** for fiction, selected by judges Sandra Lim (poetry) and Ru Freeman (fiction).

The Writers Exchange Award is generously supported by Maureen Mahon Egen, a member of Poets & Writers' Emeritus Board.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Efforts to restrict access to books—especially books by BIPOC and LGBTQ+ authors—were relentless this year. Appallingly, threats of violence against authors continued, as did threats to librarians, educators, booksellers, and others who work to connect readers with books. **Poets & Writers stands unequivocally with writers—and readers—in defending freedom of expression and opposing censorship in all its forms.** We are a member of the National Coalition Against Censorship and a partner in the American Library Association's United Against Book Bans campaign.





Poets & Writers celebrates the indispensable contributions of writers both to our national discourse and to the inner lives of readers at our annual gala.

The 2023 gala, which took place on Monday, March 27, at Pier Sixty in New York City, drew over 500 guests from all aspects of the literary and publishing communities—including writers, agents, editors, publishers, and booksellers. Hosted by **LeVar Burton**, the event honored **Colin Channer, Reyna Grande**, and **Celeste Ng** with the 2023 Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Awards, which recognize writers who have given generously to other writers or to the broader literary community. Jennifer Hershey, senior vice president, publisher, and editor in chief of Ballantine Books, received the 2023 Editor's Award. With the determined leadership of Books-A-Million CEO Terry Finley, who served as gala chair, the event raised over a million dollars to support Poets & Writers' programs and publications.





redit: Maraarita Corpora

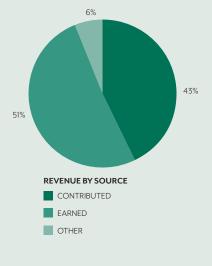


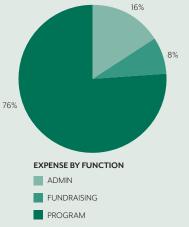
Top: Gala Chair Terry Finley, CEO of Books-A-Million. Center: Esther Cajahuaringa (center) and Kandace Coston (right), recipients of publishing internships funded by Celeste Ng, accept the Barnes & Noble Writers for Writers Award from host LeVar Burton (left) on Ng's behalf. Bottom left (from left): LeVar Burton, Reyna Grande, Colin Channer, and Jennifer Hershey. Right: Author Jodi Picoult presents the Editor's Award to Jennifer Hershey.



UNRESTRICTED ACTIVITY

FY 2023





UNRESTRICTED OPERATING REVENUE

Total Unrestricted Operating Revenue	\$4,267,100
In-Kind Services	
Contributed Revenue	1,815,223
Investment Revenue & Endowment Draw	211,931
Total Earned Revenue	\$2,196,705
Earned Non-program Revenue	1,489,295
Earned Program Revenue	

OPERATING EXPENSES

Program	
Fundraising	
General & Administrative	
Total Operating Expenses	\$4,536,588
Net Unrestricted Activity	(269,488)
Net Donor Restricted Activity	455,870
Net Total Activity	\$186,382

*Based on the draft of the FY23 annual audit; subject to change pending completion of the audit. Our Audited Financial Statement and Form 990 are available on our website at pw.org/AnnualReport.

DONORS

We are grateful to every donor who helps support our programs and publications for creative writers. Due to space limitations, we list below only donations of \$1,000 and above made between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023.

\$100,000 AND ABOVE

Books-A-Million, Inc. Liana Foundation New York City Department of Cultural Affairs New York State Council on the Arts Penguin Random House

\$50,000 TO \$99,999

Barnes & Noble Booksellers California Arts Council Simon & Schuster, Inc.

\$25,000 TO \$49,999

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\$10,000 TO \$24,999

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