

February 2020

Dear Friend of the WNBA,

It's been a busy few weeks in the publishing world.

The [turmoil at the Romance Writers of America \(RWA\)](#), the [controversy surrounding \*American Dirt\*](#), the [results of the Lee and Low survey](#), and the [blunder of alternate covers by Barnes and Noble](#) have elevated the conversation around racism, diversity, and representation in publishing.



As Bookwomen, we are advocates for books and must speak up.

Every single one of us has a voice. And we have the responsibility to use our voices to not only talk about our experiences and preferences but also to support one another's stories and to make sure they're told factually and responsibly.

When we see misrepresentation, inaccuracies, disparity, or exclusionary practices, it is our obligation to object.

We need to push the conversation forward.

We can do this by:

- reading diverse books
- reading diverse books especially to the children in our lives
- bringing books of all types and written by people of all races, genders, identities, abilities, religions, nationalities, experiences, opportunities, and ideologies into bookstores, libraries, schools, and our homes
- sponsoring initiatives that allow marginalized voices to be brought to the forefront
- attending programs that highlight views different from our own
- telling our favorite publishers that we want more diverse books

- supporting publishers and publications who are leading the way
- and by using our platforms to enlighten those around us as to why diversity and representation is vital to who we are as human beings.

Books are tools to enlighten, educate, and entertain. They allow us to see perspectives beyond our own as well as the ability to see ourselves more clearly. They allow us to realize that we are all connected through the human experience.

But if only certain stories are told or if stories are told in inauthentic or harmful ways, then not only do we miss out on seeing ourselves reflected on the page but also stereotypes and biases can be perpetuated. Misrepresentation is just as dangerous as lack of representation — maybe even more dangerous.

When all we see are those just like us, we lose the opportunity to learn from other people's perspectives and experiences. We are denied the chance to become more empathetic beings.

In 1917, women were fighting to secure the right to vote. Female booksellers were excluded from membership in the all-male Booksellers' League. They were tired of being excluded from the conversation. So a group of female booksellers bonded together and formed the WNBA, an organization open to all booklovers.

They used their voices and paved the way for us to use ours.

Speak up for your fellow booklovers.

Join the conversation.

Sincerely,

**Julie L. Frey (Greater Philadelphia)**

**Editor in Chief**

***The Bookwoman***

**[newsletter@wnba-books.org](mailto:newsletter@wnba-books.org)**

## Take the 2020 WNBA Survey

We are asking members of our WNBA community to take a few minutes to fill out our [2020 Survey](#).

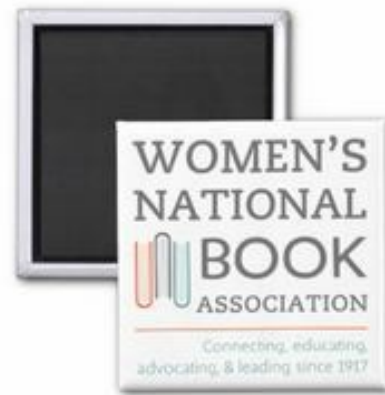
We welcome feedback from WNBA members (including board members and committee chairs), past members, newsletter subscribers, and those who follow us on social media.



Your input helps us get to know you better, and it's your chance to tell us how we can best serve your interests.

[Take the Survey](#)

And, as a thank you for your time, you can enter to win a WNBA tote and magnet!



Let's make 2020 the best year for the WNBA yet! Thank you for your help! More swag can be found on [Zazzle](#).

## Evaluating Diversity in Your Book Collections

By Julie L. Frey (Greater Philadelphia)

Whether you are evaluating your own book collection, curating a collection for a library, creating a to-be-read list or bookshelf on [Goodreads](#), stocking a [Little Free Library](#), or picking books to review, it is important to think about the books you are choosing.



Asking yourself the following questions will help guide your selection process.

### What questions should you ask?

- What do the books present as "normal"?
  - Whose perspectives are presented?
  - Whose perspectives are silenced or ignored?
- What assumptions do the books make?
  - These assumptions (about age, gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, religion, location, and culture) could be about characters, people in general, or even about the reader.
- Do the books include diverse characters (from various races, genders, sexes, abilities, classes, nationalities, religions, interests, physical descriptions, experiences, opportunities, etc.)?

- Are the diverse characters main characters or only secondary characters?
- Do the books avoid offensive expressions, negative attitudes, stereotypes, or one-dimensional representations?
- Do all of your books with Black characters focus on slavery? Are Latinx characters all illegal immigrants? Are all your LGBTQ+ books focused on coming out stories? Are women only used to prop up the male characters? Are characters of different ethnicities, nationalities, or regions presented as lazy or of low intelligence?
- Are the books written or illustrated by a person of color or people of different nationalities, religions, or genders?
  - Do the book covers feature diverse characters?
  - Do the book covers accurately reflect the characters in the book?
- How well does the author know the group they are representing?
  - Are the events, situations, and objects depicted historically accurate?
  - Do the books accurately reflect the values inherent to the cultures being depicted?
  - Do the books include words or phrases from the culture being depicted?
  - Do the books show diversity of experiences within a particular cultural group?
- Do the books set different religions or cultures in opposition to each other?
  - If so, is that friction for a legitimate reason or due to stereotypes or biases?
- Does the collection contain a mix of books that people can see themselves represented (mirrors) and where people can learn about others (windows)?
- Why are people objecting to this book? And what prevents you from hearing their objections?

## Where can I find diverse books?

While this is by no means comprehensive, I hope these lists will help you find diverse books that you love.

- General
  - [We Need Diverse Books](#)
  - [Great Group Reads List](#)
  - [American Library Association](#)
  - [PLAG-NYC](#)
  - [Rich in Color](#)
- Children's Books
  - [Diverse Book Finder](#)
  - [#1000BlackGirls](#)
  - [Multicultural Children's Book Day](#)



Download a [pdf of this list](#).

## The 2019 NBCC Award Finalists

By Tina Ollenburg (National Network)

The [National Book Critics Circle](#) was founded in 1974 to foster conversation about reading, criticism, and literature. The finalists for the award were announced last month, and the ceremony is held each year in March to honor U.S. literature in six categories: autobiography, biography, criticism, poetry, fiction, and nonfiction.



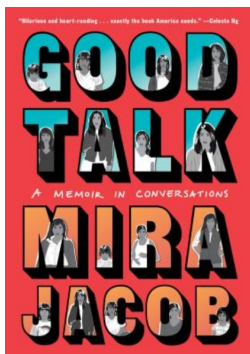
The NBCC Award events below are free and open to the public. All are held at the New School in New York City.

March 11, 2020  
Reading by the finalists

March 12, 2020  
Awards Ceremony

Read the [full list of all 30 finalists](#) on their website. We have highlighted some of them for you.

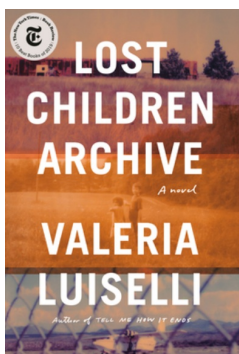
### In autobiography:



#### [Good Talk: A Memoir in Conversations](#) by Mira Jacob

A graphic memoir that is a love letter to the art of conversations, exploring how discussion helps us discover who we are and what we believe.

### In fiction:



#### [Lost Children Archive](#) by Valeria Luiselli

A mother, father, and their two children set off on a cross-country summer road trip. They play games and sing songs, but they hear news of the immigration crisis on the radio, children getting lost or detained at the southwestern border. A crisis is occurring within the car as well, a divide between the parents that the children can sense.

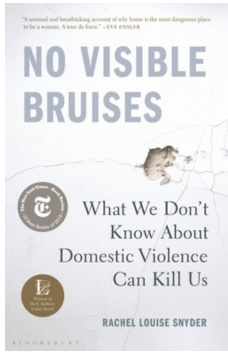
#### [Feast Your Eyes](#) by Myla Goldberg

A novel about a female photographer and her struggle with

ambition and motherhood. The book follows the life story of Lillian Preston, who bucks expectations in 1955 to follow her passion in photography. Narrated by Lillian's daughter, Samantha, *Feast Your Eyes* is a collection of interviews with friends, Samantha's memories, and journal entries.



### In nonfiction:



### [No Visible Bruises: What We Don't Know About Domestic Violence Can Kill Us](#) by Rachel Louise Snyder

An award-winning journalist's investigation into the true scale of domestic violence, and how deeply it plays a part in America's most pressing social crises.

## WNBA Pannell Award Nominees Announced

The Women's National Book Association is pleased to announce the 2020 WNBA Pannell Award nominees:

### **General Bookstore Category**

- A Great Good Place for Books (Oakland, CA)
- A Little Bookish (Ooltewah, TN)
- After-words Bookstore (Chicago, IL)
- Belmont Books (Belmont, MA)
- Bird & Beckett (San Francisco, CA)
- BookBar (Denver, CO)
- Book Passage (Corte Madera, CA)
- BookPeople (Austin, TX)
- Books on B (Hayward, CA)
- Bookshop West Portal (San Francisco, CA)
- BookSmart (Morgan Hill, CA)
- Brain Lair (South Bend, IN)
- East City Bookshop (Washington, DC)
- Fiction Addiction (Greenville, SC)
- Gallery Book Shop & Bookwinkle's Children's Books (Mendocino, CA)
- Ink Fish Books (Warren, RI)
- Ink Spell Books (Half Moon Bay, CA)
- Interabang Books (Dallas, TX)
- Kew & Willow Books (Kew Gardens, NY)
- Marcus Book Store (Oakland, CA)
- McIntyre's Books (Pittsboro, NC)
- Morgan Hill Bookstore (New London, NH)
- Mrs. Dalloway's Literary & Garden Arts (Berkeley, CA)
- Parnassus Books (Nashville, TN)
- Politics and Prose Bookstore (Washington, DC)



Rediscovered Books - Boise (Boise, ID)

Savoy Bookshop & Café (Westerly, RI)

Scuppernong Books (Greensboro, NC)

The Bookworm (Omaha, NE)

The Country Bookshop (Southern Pines, NC)

The Open Book (Warrenton, VA)

Towne Book Center (Collegeville, PA)

### **Children's Specialty Bookstore Category**

Blue Manatee Literacy Project Bookstore (Cincinnati, OH)

Books of Wonder (New York, NY)

Cover to Cover Books for Young Readers (Columbus, OH)

Eyeseeme (University City, MO)

Linden Tree Books (Los Altos, CA)

Little Shop of Stories (Decatur, GA)

Monkey See, Monkey Do...Children's Bookstore (Clarence, NY)

Second Star to the Right Books (Denver, CO)

Square Books Jr. (Oxford, MS)

Stories Bookshop + Storytelling Lab (Brooklyn, NY)

**Thank you for all who nominated bookstores!**

## **Member Benefit: Member News**

**By Julie L. Frey (Greater Philadelphia)**

Tell us your news!

One of the benefits of WNBA membership is the opportunity to share your news, such as new jobs, upcoming book releases, publications, events, awards, speaking engagements, and other professional accomplishments.



We have just added two new types of news you can submit in addition to general updates: WNBA Member Advocacy Stories and WNBA Member Testimonials.

All news may now be [submitted via our website](#). The link is also found under "Member" on the navigation menu.

Chapters will continue to have Bookwoman Correspondents collect news and send it in should you prefer to submit via email.

Stories and news are accepted year-round.

News and advocacy stories will be displayed on the website, and may be distributed through emails or on social media.

We look forward to hearing all of the exciting things our members have been up to, so share your news today!

# Send Us Your Favorite Books!



In preparation for Women's History Month, we want to know what books about women by women writers you love.

Send the title and author to [newsletter@wnba-books.org](mailto:newsletter@wnba-books.org).

Books will be featured on social media in March!

## *The Bookwoman Staff*

**Editor in Chief:** Julie L. Frey (Greater Philadelphia)  
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**Copy Editor:** Rachel Slaiman (New York City)

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Newsletter background: Books highlighted from the WNBA's [Celebrating Women's Voices](#) centennial program  
This email contains affiliate links.

### [Women's National Book Association](#)

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