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# eNewsletter

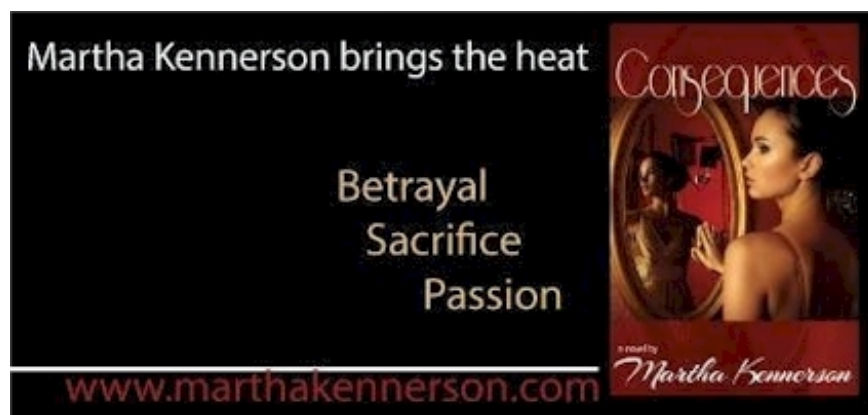
Issue #219 October 28, 2014

*Black Literature is for Everyone*



Troy, this month's eNewsletter is sponsored by

## Martha Kennerson



Kristine is beautiful, smart, driven, and all set to have everything she wants in life. That is, until an ill-fated encounter alters the path she's chosen in such a way that she's forced to make the kind of life-altering decisions no woman should ever have to face. While waking up naked in a strange bed with a couple she barely knew wasn't Kristine's choice, how she deals with the consequences of that night creates a series of shocking choices that have a domino effect of turmoil to those close to her. Not everyone agrees with the direction Kristine's life takes, but ultimately, she learns that strength and forgiveness can come from the most unfortunate of circumstances.

Visit [www.marthakennerson.com](http://www.marthakennerson.com) to buy *Consequences*, and to find out more about Martha and her journey.

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## Top Cities for Readers of African American Literature

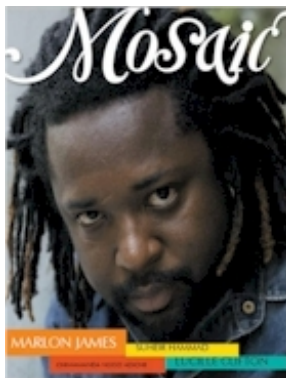
AALBC.com assessed the relative strengths of almost 300 American cities, to determine which cities are best able to provide environments that are supportive of, and conducive to, the enjoyment of African American Literature.

The result is a list of 26 cities we think are doing a great job. [Let us know what you think ►](#)



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## Authors You Should Know



### Marlon James

James was born in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1970. He graduated from the University of the West Indies in 1991 with a degree in literature. His first novel, *John Crow's Devil*, was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize and was a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize. James lives in Kingston.

His most recent novel, *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, Selected as one of the Library Journal's Best Books of 2014. [More](#)





### Lauren Francis-Sharma

Lauren is the daughter of Trinidadian-born parents, was raised in Baltimore, Maryland. She graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Michigan Law School and practiced as a corporate lawyer before writing *'Til the Well Runs Dry*, her first novel.

Women's magazines from Elle to Oprah Winfrey's O have praised Francis-Sharma's novel, and it was recently the centerpiece of a small book festival in Washington during Caribbean Heritage Month ..."—Krissah Thompson, The Washington Post [More ►](#)



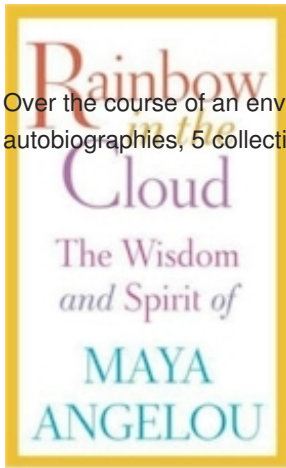
### Michael B. Jackson

Jackson was born and raised in Newark, New Jersey. He recently retired after working for 26 years with New Jersey Juvenile Corrections and Parole. His recently (October 2014) released novel, *FatherHoodlum: Chronicles of a Prison Dad*, is his first venture into fiction writing.

Jackson, founder of the Internet based radio station, Prison Nation Radio, is a passionate advocate for the rights, protections and success of formerly incarcerated people and their families and those without a voice. He lives by the philosophy that "Doing good is the best revenge" and encourages those leaving prison to take control of their own success and "Do good, with a vengeance." [More ►](#)

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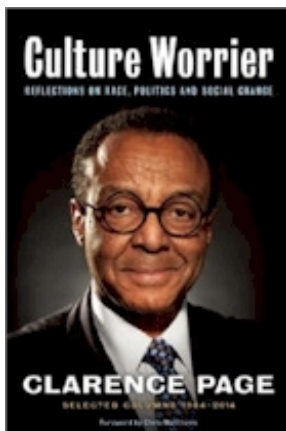
## Book Reviews



## Rainbow in the Cloud: The Wisdom and Spirit of Maya Angelou

Over the course of an enviable career that spanned a half-century, she would write 7 autobiographies, 5 collections of essays, 18 books of poetry, 2 cookbooks, 7 children's books, and 7 plays. She also received innumerable awards and accolades, including 60 honorary doctorates.

*Rainbow in the Cloud* is a collection of 200 of the late icon's most memorable quotes borrowed not only from previously published works but from social media posts and pearls of wisdom shared over the years with [her only son, Guy Johnson](#), and other family members. [More ►](#)



## Culture Worrier: Selected Columns 1984—2014: Reflections on Race, Politics and Social Change

Clarence Page takes pride in the fact that his articles enjoy a broad appeal, a reflection of his sterling reputation as an impartial pundit willing to criticize folks on either side of the aisle as he sees fit. On the one hand, he might indict Ronald Reagan for playing the race card by invoking the image of “welfare queens” to curry the favor of rednecks during the 1980 presidential campaign. On the other, he'll point out how, during the 2008 campaign, Obama declared, “Race is an issue that I believe this nation cannot afford to ignore,” only to proceed to do just that once he got into office. [More ►](#)

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**AALBC.com Videos**

# The Importance of Literacy

An avid reader, Gail Newell of the Go On Girl! Book Club's Maryland 2 chapter; a young writer, Taheerah Abdul-Rahmaan; a library CEO, Dr. Carla Dean; and two accomplished authors, Leonard Pitts, Jr., and Jason Mott; take the time to [explain the importance of literacy](#).

If literacy, in the Black community is important to you, please share their message. [Watch ►](#)

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## Cornel West: Video - Strand bookstore October 22, 2014

Cornel West and [Darryl Pinckney](#) discussed the financialization, militarization, and privatization of the United States government. West also provided an update on the protests in Ferguson, MO where he and 49 other people were arrested for disturbing the peace.



This conversation took place the Strand bookstore's rare book room, on October 22, 2014 in New York City. [Watch ►](#)

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## Go On Girl! Book Club's 22nd Annual Author Awards

Tracey Y. Smith, National Media & Author Relations Chairperson for Go On Girl! Book Club, highlights their 22nd Annual Author Awards celebration at the Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland.



The Author Awards dinner was held on Saturday, June 7, 2014 and honored the 2013 winning authors including Author of the Year, Leonard Pitts, Jr.; Life Achievement Awardee, Marita Golden; Jr. GOG Reader's Choice Awardee, Kwame Alexander and Unpublished Writer Winner, Taheerah Abdul-Raheem. [Watch ►](#)

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## Book Recommendations



## National Book Awards Finalists Announced

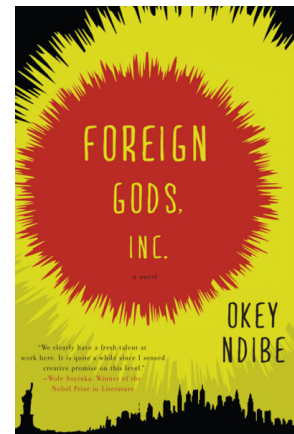
AALBC.com congratulates **Jacqueline Woodson** for her novel, *Brown Girl Dreaming*, which was nominated in the Young People's Literature category. We also congratulate, Fred Moten and Claudia Rankine, who were honored in the Poetry category for *The Feet Trip* and *Citizen: An American Lyric* respectively, and all of the other nominees. [More ►](#)

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## MahoganyBooks Deal of the Week

***Foreign Gods, Inc.***, tells the story of Ike, a New York-based Nigerian cab driver who sets out to steal the statue of an ancient war deity from his home village and sell it to a New York gallery.

Ike's plan is fueled by desperation. Despite a degree in economics from a major American college, his strong accent has barred him from the corporate world. Forced to eke out a living as a cab driver, he is unable to manage the emotional and material needs of a temperamental African American bride and a widowed mother demanding financial support. When he turns to gambling, his mounting losses compound his woes.



List Price: \$16.00, Amazon's Price: \$13.89, **Our Sale Price: \$11.20** [Get the Deal ►](#)

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## Citizens Creek: A Novel by Lalita Tademy

"Lalita Tademy has done it again—*Citizen's Creek* is a deep, touching novel of great historical import and lyrical beauty. At the heart of this book is a headstrong family living both as free blacks as well as Muscogee-speaking Creek. We learn the history of a people: one in constant battle to protect both their lands and freedoms, their loves and loved ones--and ultimately, the quest for their inheritance and birthright as Americans--in the greatest, truest sense of the word."—ZZ Packer [More ►](#)

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## Mad at Miles by Pearl Cleage

"The title came about because she stumbled across a Miles Davis interview where he bragged about slapping Cicely Tyson in the mouth and how she was afraid of him when they were married. Wasn't the first time I heard it, but I was shocked when I did. Miles has always been touted in the black community and among jazz fans as if he was some "musical genius/hero." I was shocked and offended that he found it comical to abuse a woman, and that his behavior seemed to be a well kept secret. My feel is if Miles doesn't respect women, he gets no loyalty from me as a fan...I give credit where it's due in him being a musician, but you will not hear me giving him accolades." —Dee  
(from the [AALBC.com Discussion Forum](#))



With directness, Pearl Cleage takes an unblinking look at the current state of abusive relationships and battered women. This is a funny, angry, lyric piece of theatre that all should see, in order to better understand the realities women have dealt with for decades. [More ►](#)

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## Related Articles & News

### Black Expressions Book Club is no More

Black Expressions Book Club (BE), the first African American direct mail book club, has officially rejoined Doubleday Book Club, effectively ending its existence. BE was a significant part of the increased attention paid to Black books during the 10 year period beginning in the late nineties and was a big part of the Black book landscape.



[Carol Mackey](#) was the editor and public face of BE for most of the club's life. Through Carol's leadership the club helped bolster the careers of many authors and supported entities like AALBC.com, by co-sponsoring our [2nd annual Black Pack Party in Los Angeles](#) BE's founding editor was Monica Harris (RIP), their final editor was Danielle Jackson.

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### Addicted ★★☆☆ — Film Review

I polled about a dozen sisters to see what they thought of the picture. They all loved it. But we men had found it sheer torture, from the tame sex scenes showing precious little skin, to the Puritanical moralizing, to the over-the-top melodrama.

That being said, since the estrogen-laden ladies uniformly enjoyed the film, I'm inclined to give them the benefit of the doubt, and assume that testosterone heavily influenced my viewing experience. Therefore, fellow males might want to take anything positive I have to say here with a ton of salt. [More ►](#)



### Gugu Mbatha-Raw The “Beyond the Lights” Interview

#### **Belle and Noni are almost polar opposites.**

“Noni’s not a bad girl. She’s more of a victim. What interested me in this film, after doing *Belle*, which was a period drama set in a very repressed society, was the idea of exploring something much more contemporary: the sexualization of women and girls by the music and entertainment industries, how that has become the norm, and what is the cost of using sex to sell music, psychologically and emotionally. Gina [director Gina Prince-Bythewood] often talks about changing the conversation and steering the culture in a different direction, and about providing some inspiration to become your authentic self. Noni has become trapped by her public persona, so there was a lot to sink my teeth into.” —Gugu Mbatha-Raw [More ►](#)

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### Gina Prince-Bythewood The “Beyond the Lights” Interview

Born on June 10, 1969, Gina Maria Prince-Bythewood studied film at UCLA before beginning her career as a writer for the TV sitcom, *A Different World*. In 2000, she made a noteworthy directorial debut with the critically-acclaimed *Love & Basketball*, which netted a dozen accolades during awards season, including a couple of NAACP Image Awards, a BET Award and several Black Reel Awards.

Gina’s next feature was *The Secret Life of Bees* (2008), which also earned its share of trophies, including Image Awards for Best Picture and Best Director. Here, she talks about making her third movie, *Beyond the Lights*, a romance drama co-starring Gugu Mbatha-Raw and Nate Parker. [More ►](#)

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## Believe none of what you hear, and only half of what you see.

On a daily basis I see things on social media that demonstrates how easily we can be manipulated into believing that something is true, when it should be obvious that it is not. Facebook, for example, has been putting a lot more video on my newsfeed lately. I've started to notice a lot of videos that are clearly fake. However, based upon the comments posted, people believe these fake videos to be true. It is very scary how easily we can be fooled.



For example, I saw a video posted by someone I thought was pretty sharp. They used this video to prove how skilled the martial artist Bruce Lee was with nunchucks, which is a weapon made of two, foot-long sticks, connected by a short chain. Here we see Lee playing ping pong using these sticks. This is not to say Bruce Lee was not a skilled martial artist, but the very idea that some people would actually believe this feat to be humanly possible is, itself, unbelievable. [Join the Conversation](#)



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With our free application you can stay up to date with our latest book and film reviews, interviews, articles, videos and more. You'll find content not mentioned in our eNewsletter, as our eNewsletter primarily focuses on more recent information. [Get the App](#) ►



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## A Note to Authors

## This Month's Note: "Old Fashioned" eNewsletter Still Work — Great!

Social media is excellent for engaging with readers, but the majority of that engagement remains on the social media's platform which does little to bring visitors to your website where a richer experience, that you manage, is possible.

Don't underestimate the effectiveness of an "old fashioned" eNewsletter (like the one you are reading now) to bring visitors to your website. With a newsletter, you can reach all of your readers without having to worry about a social media algorithms deciding which readers see your message. Today, I use **Mad Mimi** to manage AALBC.com's eNewsletter. Mad Mimi is free for up to 2,500 subscribers. **Mail Chimp** is also a good option and is free for up to 2,000 subscribers. **Constant Contact** is popular (I used it for years in the past), but they do not offer a free option and the service is relatively expensive.

Reaction to last month's recommendation: **Authors add a link on your website to an independent website** ([Follow this link to learn why](#)), resulted in a number of authors linking back to AALBC.com including **Jewell Parker Rhodes** and **Frankie Lemon**. Thanks y'all!

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Troy, please consider purchasing and remember to renew your [subscription to AALBC.com's eNewsletter](#)—less than 50 cents an issue.



If you've read something in our eNewsletter, that you enjoyed or felt was important, please share it. Again, **we** are responsible for ensuring our stories are told, shared, and preserved. As the number of platforms promoting our work continue to decrease your active participation is needed.



Finally, if you are interested in [sponsoring our eNewsletter](#), November and December are available.

Peace,  
Troy Johnson,  
Founder and Webmaster

AALBC.com eNewsletter – October 28, 2014 – Issue # 219

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