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eNewsletter

Issue #217 August 26, 2014

Black Literature is for Everyone



firstname, fallback=Reader), this month's eNewsletter is sponsored by

Grand Central Publishing

The sequel to Carl Weber's *New York Times* bestseller *The Choir Director* is here!

"Captivating, thrilling, sexy and insane.... Aaron Mackie is back."
— RT Book Reviews (Top Pick!)

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Carl Weber
The Choir Director 2: Runaway Bride

In this sequel to Carl Weber's *New York Times* bestseller *The Choir Director*, the faith and friendship of two men will be tested in ways they never thought possible...

Three years ago, the unlikely duo of Bishop TK Wilson and choir director Aaron Mackie saved First Jamaica Ministries from financial ruin with their successful church choir. Now, jealousy and lies has both men's lives spiraling out of control and the lines TK and Aaron might have to cross will force them to choose between faith and friendship, or as TK puts it, "between heaven and hell."

RT Book Reviews named *The Choir Director 2* (Grand Central Publishing, 8/19/2014) a Top Pick, calling it "a tale so captivating, thrilling, sexy and insane that it's enough to make a preacher curse." Visit CarlWeber.net to buy it now!

Power List Best Selling Books — Summer 2014



In an era when the NY Times Bestsellers list can go several months without a single novel written by a Black person, it is increasingly important for us to recognize and celebrate the most popular books written by Black writers. This is not just for the benefit of Black authors or Black readers; this is for the benefit of everyone who loves a wide range of literature. [Spread the word.](#)

Authors You Should Know



George Moses Horton — 1st African American to publish any book in the South

George Moses Horton (ca. 1797-1883), was born in Northampton County, North Carolina. A slave for sixty-eight years, Horton spent much of his life on a farm near Chapel Hill, and in time he fostered a deep connection with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The “Colored Bard of North Carolina” was the only man to publish volumes of poetry while in bondage and the first African American to publish any book in the South. [More >](#)



Mona Lisa Saloy — Poet, Author, Educator, Folklorist

Dr. Mona Lisa Saloy is professor of English at Dillard University. She previously published *Red Beans & Ricely Yours*, which won the 2005 T. S. Eliot Prize and the PEN/Oakland Josephine Miles Prize in 2006. Saloy’s literary voice represents the African-American and the New Orleans Creole cultural experience.

Saloy is a noted speaker and storyteller, who consults to the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities (LEH), the Louisiana Division of the Arts (LDOA), and is an active member of the Louisiana Folklore Society. Also, Saloy composed a praise song & performed for two presidents. [Read a review of her latest, *Second Line Home: New Orleans Poems*.](#)



Ishmael Beah — Child Soldier Pens his 1st Novel

Ishmael Beah was born in Sierra Leone in 1980. He moved to the United States in 1998 and finished his last two years of high school at the United



Nations International School in New York. In 2004 he graduated from Oberlin College with a B.A. in political science. He is a member of the Human Rights Watch Children's Rights Division Advisory Committee and has spoken before the United Nations, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities (CETO) at the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, and many other NGO panels on children

affected by the war. [Read about Beah's new novel, *Radiance of Tomorrow*.](#)



Drusilla Dunjee Houston — Foremother of Africana Historical Writing and Research

“Like many African American women writers swallowed up and languishing in the historical gap, Houston is one of the most prolific and all but forgotten African American women writers of the 20th century.

Houston burst on the historical literary scene in 1926 with Volume I of her magnum opus *Wonderful Ethiopians of the Ancient Cushite Empire Book 1: Nations of the Cushite Empire, Marvelous Facts from Authentic*

Records thought to represent the crowning achievement of Drusilla Dunjee Houston's literary life. With this work, Houston is remembered as the earliest known and possibly the only African American woman to write a multi-volume study of ancient Africa where she boldly proclaimed in 1926, an African origin of civilization and culture during one of the most turbulent periods for black Americans in American history.” —Peggy Brooks-Bertram [Learn More about Drusilla Dunjee Houston.](#)



Essex Hemphill — Poet, Writer, Activist

Born in Chicago in 1957, Essex Hemphill was raised in Washington, D.C. before settling in Philadelphia. Cleis Press calls Hemphill, “one of the most provocative African American gay authors since James Baldwin.” Winner of the 1993 American Library Association's Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Book Award, *Ceremonies* (Plume, 1992) tackles cultural controversy with remarkable force and clarity. Whether he is addressing love between men, AIDS in the African American community, racism among white gay artists, coming home or coming out, Hemphill's insights give voice to a generation

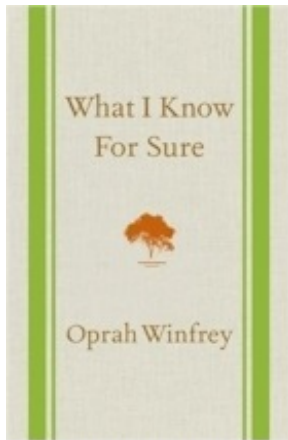
of men silenced by fears of reprisal and rejection. Hemphill passed in November of 1995. [More >](#)



Pat G'Orge-Walker — Christian Author and Comedienne

“The First Lady of Gospel Comedy,” is an accomplished Christian author and comedienne with a talent for turning her observations of church and black church life, in particular, into gems of sidesplitting humor. It is her own special gift from God that enables G'Orge-Walker to depict the often ridiculous antics of church folk. She does it without subverting the Good News or watering down the potency of its message. [More >](#)

Book Recommendations

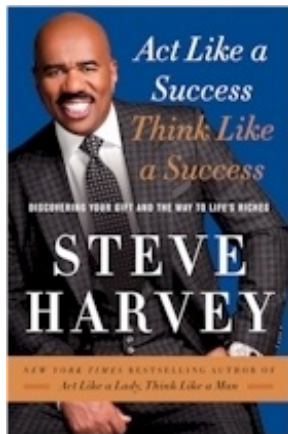


What I Know For Sure by Oprah Winfrey

An AALBC.com **Book of the Month!** for September 2014: **The 1st 50 customers that purchase this book will receive a FREE copy of *The Ditchdigger's Daughter*.** No code needed.

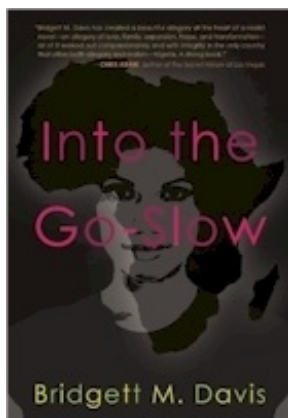
Winfrey, the nation's only African-American billionaire, has been awarded both an honorary degree by Harvard University and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. From all her experiences, she has gleaned life lessons—which, for fourteen years, she's shared in *O, The Oprah Magazine's* widely popular "What I Know For Sure" column, a monthly source of inspiration and revelation.

Now, for the first time, these thoughtful gems have been revised, updated, and collected in *What I Know For Sure*, a beautiful cloth bound book with a ribbon marker, packed with insight and revelation from Oprah. (Flatiron Books 9/2/14)



Act Like a Success, Think Like a Success: Discovering Your Gift and the Way to Life's Riches by Steve Harvey

Countless books on success tell you what you need to get that you don't already possess. In *Act Like a Success, Think Like a Success*, Steve Harvey tells you how to achieve your dreams using the gift you already have. Every one of us was born with a gift endowed by our creator—something you do the best at with very little effort. While it can be like someone else's, your gift is yours alone. No one can take it away. You are the only one who can use it—or waste it. (Amistad, 9/9/14)

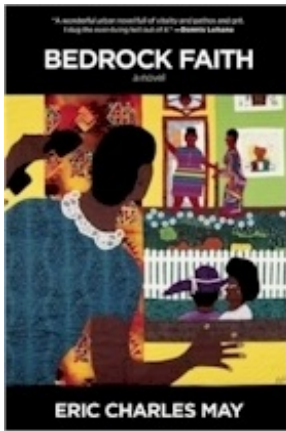


Into the Go-Slow by Bridgett M. Davis

"...Davis writes about two hot-button locations—Detroit and Lagos, yet she explores these settings without nostalgia or exoticism. She understands that these are REAL PLACES where REAL PEOPLE live. I connected all the characters, Angie, especially. Her pain so so vivid, but so is her big-hearted love for the people in her life.

...She asks whether or not African Americans can ever really go 'home' to Africa. The love story contained on these pages will break your heart, and mend it too. There's so much going on, but you never take your mind off the big question: What happened to Angie's sister, Ella? Will Angie ever find out? Who can she trust? Does she really want to know the truth? ...get this novel. You will love it." —Award Winning Author, **Tayari Jones** (The

Feminist Press at CUNY, 9/9/14)



Bedrock Faith by Eric Charles May

After fourteen years in prison, Gerald “Stew Pot” Reeves, age thirty-one, returns home to live with his mom in Parkland, a black middle-class neighborhood on Chicago’s South Side. A frightening delinquent before being sent away (his infamies included butchering a neighbor’s cat, torching another neighbor’s garage, and terrorizing the locals with a scary pit bull named Hitler), his return sends Parkland residents into a religiously infused tailspin, which only increases when Stew Pot announces that he experienced a religious awakening in prison. With uncompromising fervor (and with a new pit bull named John the Baptist), Stew Pot appoints himself the moral judge of Parkland. He discovers that a woman on his block is a lesbian and outs her to the neighborhood, after a mild threat from the block club president, Stew Pot reveals a secret that leaves the

president’s marriage in ruin... (Akashic Books, 3/4/14)



Oh Gad! by Joanne C. Hillhouse

Oh Gad! is a stirring novel about a woman facing cross-cultural odds and redefining everything she understands about her family, herself, and the country she’s never really been able to call home.

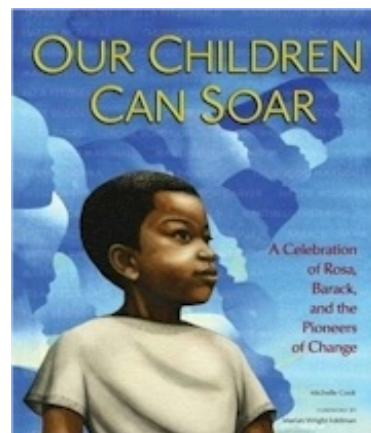
Nikki Baltimore was born in Antigua but grew up with her dad in the United States. With each year, she’s grown further apart from her mother and maternal siblings, potters in rural Antigua.

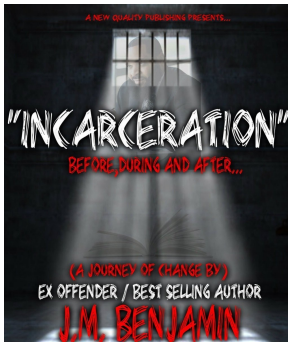
Listen to Elizabeth Nunez’s, [recommendation for the novel _Oh Gad!_](#) (Strebor Books, 4/17/12)

Our Children Can Soar: A Celebration of Rosa, Barack, and the Pioneers of Change by Michelle Cook

Rosa sat so
Martin could march.
Martin marched so
Barack could run.
Barack ran so
Our children can soar.

This is the seed of a unique picture book that is part historical, part poetry, and entirely inspirational. It takes the reader through the cumulative story of the US Civil Rights Movement, expanding the popular slogan beyond these three heroes to include more key players in the struggle for equality. Spare prose and vivid imagery make this a truly moving and accessible picture book to be savored by readers of all ages. (Bloomsbury USA Childrens 4/14/09)





“Incarceration” Before, During and After: (A Journey Of Change) by J.M. Benjamin

Incarceration is a redemptive story about the power of change and how an ex-offender refused to become another statistic once he had paid his debt to society. Award winning and best selling author J.M. Benjamin, once considered a threat to the community, gives you an up-close and personal account of growing up on the west end part of Plainfield New Jersey.

J.M. revisits his past and introduces you to life as he once knew it as a youth. He vividly takes you on an emotional journey that ultimately lead him down a path of destruction. J.M. offers hope and inspiration,

successfully demonstrating how their is in fact life after incarceration, to the one million + incarcerated, ex-offenders and those who are affected by their loved ones situation. (A New Quality Publishing, 7/24/14)

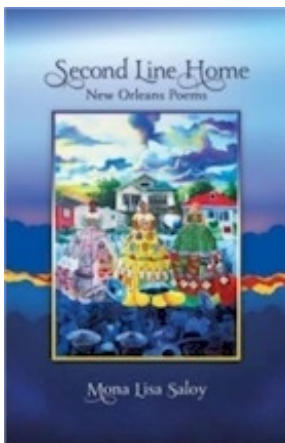
Book Reviews



Story/Time: The Life of an Idea by Bill T. Jones

Jones has choreographed for everyone from Alvin Ailey to the Boston Ballet to the Berlin Opera. And among his many accolades are a couple of Tony Awards, an Obie Award, a MacArthur Genius Fellowship, the National Medal of Arts, and induction into the National Museum of Dance Hall of Fame.

Story/Time is an ethereal memoir emblematic of this iconoclastic trailblazer’s unpredictable approach to everything he does. The book is basically an attempt to reduce to writing and photographs a trio of multi-media talks Jones delivered at Princeton University as part of the prestigious Toni Morrison Lecture Series. [More >](#)



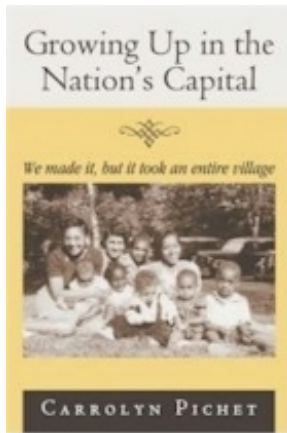
Second Line Home: New Orleans Poems by Mona Lisa Saloy

Mona Lisa Saloy’s refreshing, *Second Line Home* (2014) is a poetic memoir of her post-Katrina experiences—from her evacuation with friends and neighborhoods to her return, through efforts to rebuild and reoccupy her 7th Ward home handed down to her by her Black Creole father.

\$100,000 cost to elevate it and termite eaten wood

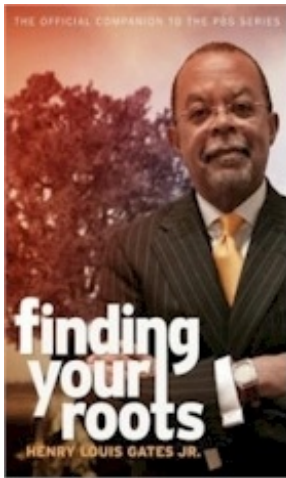
Nixed keeping our family place

(“From Lament to Hope”) [More >](#)



Growing Up in the Nation's Capital: We Made it, but it Took an Entire Village by Carrolyn Pichet

Her story will remind us of a time in neighborhoods when doors were left unlocked, and neighbors were extended family picking up the slack for each other wherever it was needed. That reason alone makes Pichet's book a good, nostalgic read even if her past reads nothing like ours. We will connect to the sense of pride and purpose she grew up with in her family and her community, and how it illustrates the African proverb that it takes a village to raise a child. "Back then, if a neighbor lent a cup of sugar to my mother, she paid back the loan with a cup of flour, a stick of butter or a slice of homemade cake or pie. Since our neighbors were extended family, the doors were never locked. There was no shame in bartering or exchanging amongst us. We were all struggling to make ends meet, and every one of us was willing and eager to render some service. [More >](#)



Finding Your Roots by Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Most black people hit a dead end when trying to trace their lineage, because their ancestors were considered fungible goods during slavery, meaning they were merely personal property to be bought and sold, and whipped and shipped at the will of their owners. While in bondage, they couldn't marry, start a family or even raise their own offspring.

For that reason, Henry Louis Gates' *African-American Lives* proved to be a hit on TV, since the popular PBS program profiled prominent black figures' attempt to reconstruct their family trees with his help. Turns out some other ethnicities are just as curious about their heritage. So, Dr. Gates decided to host another show, expanding his focus this time to include a diversity of folks reflecting the full spectrum of the racial rainbow. [More >](#)



Tony Brown's Journal is Now Available Online

The website is a resurrection of 40 years of broadcast excellence and hundreds of titles of professional-grade content with high-production values from *Tony Brown's Journal*, America's "#1-rated talk/educational TV series" (circa 1968-2008), that covers African-American history with legends such as Martin Luther King, Elijah Muhammad, and historians [Dr. Chancellor Williams](#)/*The Destruction of Black Civilization* and [J. A. Rogers](#).

Tony Brown's Journal was the first series on national television to break the story on the odious Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment on Black men and the infamous Tulsa Race Riot of 1921. There is also the famous 1974 debate between [Dr. Frances Welsing](#) and Dr. William Shockley on the issue of racial supremacy.

Related Articles & News



Map of Black Owned Book Stores

Check out our map of Black-owned independent bookstores.

We are also making this map freely available to anyone to embed on their website or blog with just a single line of code. Help promote our cultural institutions. They thrive with our support.



Farrakhan to Black Youth: Study Ferguson, MO and Gaza

The military readiness of police in Ferguson, Missouri is a warning to all Black youth in America, according to Minister Louis Farrakhan, the leader of the Nation of Islam. In a two-hour speech Sunday, August 17 from his organization's headquarters Mosque Maryam in Chicago, Farrakhan made a passionate plea for Black youth to see in Ferguson a tip off of what government agencies are preparing for them in the urban centers of America. As for Gaza, he said the willingness to bomb humans in tightly compact neighborhoods was a sign of how suppression could happen in Black neighborhoods here. [More >](#)



“...Hiphop, as a Whole, is Wack”

“And to those of you who say I know nothing about Hiphop, if ‘Blurred Lines’ is Hiphop, I don’t want to know anything about it. So let me officially go on record now and say that I hate Hiphop. There are certain artists who claim Hiphop that I dig, but Hiphop as a whole is wack. It’s a parasitic culture that preys on real musicians for its livelihood. I may not know anything about Hiphop, but I don’t have to. Without real artists and musicians like me, you’d have nothing to steal. I know enough about it all to know that.”

—Nicholas Payton in, An Open Letter To Pharrell Williams (Blurred Lines Vol. 3) where he castigates Pharrell over his unwillingness to knowledge that he stole Marvin Gaye’s tune, ‘Got to Give It Up.’ [What do you think?](#)

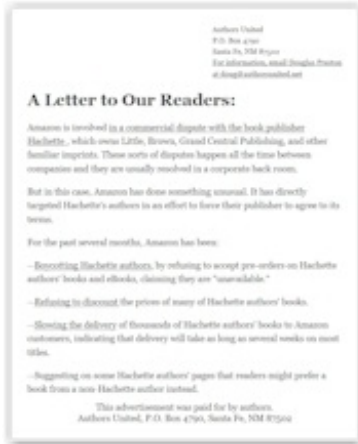


Almost half of Black Gay Men, in Atlanta, are HIV Positive

Sullivan’s preliminary results in Atlanta confirmed the huge racial differences that persist. Among black gay men, 43 percent were HIV positive, compared to 13 percent of white gay men, even though the black gay men had fewer sex partners and less unprotected sex. Everyone also



reported a tendency to date within the same race. Black gay men said that 80 percent of their partners in the past year were also black. The white gay men said that 73 percent of their partners were also white. [Join the conversation](#)



Authors Beg Amazon for Mercy

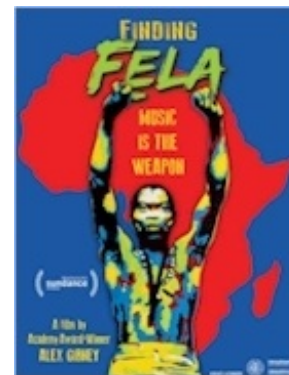
“...[W]e encourage Amazon in the strongest possible terms to stop harming the livelihood of the authors on whom it has built its business.” —Authors United

Not all author agree, “...publishers like Hachette have a long history of treating authors and readers poorly. Amazon, on the other hand, has built its reputation on valuing authors and readers dearly. ” [What do you think?](#)

Film Reviews

Finding Fela: Music is the Weapon

Finding Fela tells the story of Fela Kuti's life (1938 - 1997), his music, and his social and political importance. This in-depth look at the man who created Afrobeat (a fusion of Jazz, traditional West African rhythms, Funk, Highlife, and psychedelic rock) brings audiences close to Mr. Kuti's fight against the dictatorial Nigerian government of the 1970s and 1980s. With his audacious music and a great deal of courage, Fela Kuti helped bring a change towards democracy in Nigeria, promoted Pan Africanist politics to the entire world and became an inspiration in the global fight for the rights of all oppressed people. [More >](#)



Get on Up: The James Brown Story

“...all the producers, writers, and the director of the James Brown movie are white. No black people were hired until a few weeks before the cameras started rolling, the actors.” —Gregory Allen Howard, Award-winning screenwriter

“...the non-linear (back and forth) telling of the story limit's the intensity of a narrative that naturally builds, but I also think the film is pretty balanced with Brown's talents and his flaws.” —C. Liegh McNnis publisher of Black Magnolias Literary Journal

This is just some of the commentary in addition to [our review](#) .

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You may discover a writer whose work you'll enjoy. YouTube, for now anyway, is one of the remaining (perhaps the only) major social networking platforms that financially compensates you in return for the content contributed to their platform. They provide a service to you without trying to completely cannibalize your website's traffic.

If you subscribe to AALBC.com's YouTube channel you will help me spread the word about Black literature. Your support matters. Promoting Black literature has always been a grassroots effort; it is not done by corporations or governments but by individuals like you and me.



Events

The Official NYC 80th Birthday Party for Sonia Sanchez

Join us on Friday, September 19, 2014, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., in Brooklyn NY.

This will be an actual party, not a lot of speechifying. There will be performances by [Ursula Rucker](#) and [jessica Care moore](#), music by DJ Reborn, and more. [More >](#)



African American Literary Awards Show

The 2014 African American Literary Awards Show will be held at the MIST, 46 W 116th St, New York, NY 10026 on September 27th.

Voting for the 2014 AALAS is open Now through September 7th, 2014.



The **Baltimore African American Book Festival** will take place October 11, 2014, from 10am to 5pm, at the Enoch Pratt Central Library, 400 Cathedral St Baltimore Md 21201. Scheduled speakers include; [Trice](#)

Hickman, author of new novel *Troublemaker*; Sherri Booker, winner of an **NAACP Image Award** for her memoir *Nine Years Under: Coming of Age in an Inner City Funeral Home* ; **Nikki Woods**, senior producer of the “Tom Joyner Morning Show” and author of the AALBC.com #1 bestseller, *Easier Said Than Done* ; Ella Curry, Owner of **EDC Creations**; and AALBC.com’s Founder, Troy Johnson. [Learn More >](#)

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Peace,
Troy Johnson,
Founder and Webmaster

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