

# AT THE LIBRARY

Events and Happenings at the San Francisco Public Library

January 2021

Vol. 52 No. 1

## Black History Month Is Live at the Library

**Y**outh and their families will have opportunities to listen and learn from a delightful diversity of Black artists in our first-ever virtual presentation of *More Than a Month*—a two-month celebration of Black history, culture and heritage.

Beloved storyteller Kirk Waller brings stories from his people to school-age audiences. Take a musical trip to the West Indies with Fauna Solomon and listen to the only acoustic instrument invented in the 20th century. Explore the origins of Hambone body percussion with Unique Derique and express your own musical style in a fun interactive workshop. Tween readers will delight in a conversation with Torrey Maldonado, teacher and author of middle-grade titles, *Tight* and *What Lane?* Through a special partnership with SFUSD, we spotlight the charismatic talents of storyteller Diane Ferlatte and her musical sidekick, Erik Pearson, and the extraordinarily talented National Book Award-winning author of *The Poet X*, Elizabeth Acevedo. For all ages, art educator Sedey Gebreyes from the Museum of the African Diaspora will lead two art workshops—one in January and one in February—on hand drawing and mail art.

*More Than a Month* brings many events for adults, including art, authors, poets and more. We



*Revelations: Art from the African American South*, courtesy of the Fine Art Museums of San Francisco



Melissa Valentine, Elizabeth Acevedo and Kirk Waller

continue our partnership with the de Young Museum for two visual presentations at the beginning of the year, *Revelations: Art from the African American South* and *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power*. SF Poet Laureate Kim Shuck holds space for an evening of Afrofuturistic poetry; readers include Ishmael Reed, Staajabu, devorah major, Tureeda Mikell, Avotcja and Dr. Glenn Parris. For crime fiction lovers, we have an exciting lineup of Black crime writers, who will discuss their writing and the history and future of the genre. We also welcome the return of *The Hatchery: Nurturing Creative Writers of Color*, now held in our virtual space. Visit [sfpl.org/more-than-a-month](http://sfpl.org/more-than-a-month) for more information.

### Youth Programs:

**Hand Drawing** – Jan. 22, 2 p.m.

**Stories of My People** – Jan. 28, 2 p.m.

**Classical Steelpan Music** – Feb. 4, 2 p.m.

**Christian Robinson and Matt de la Peña** – Feb. 5, 2 p.m.

**Diane Ferlatte** – Feb. 11, 2 p.m.

**Hambone, The Body Drum and The Rhythm Connection** – Feb. 18, 6 p.m.

**Torrey Maldonado** – Feb. 24, 4 p.m.

**Elizabeth Acevedo** – Feb. 25, 2 p.m.

### Adult Programs:

**Revelations: Art from the African American South** – Jan. 6, 7 p.m.

**The Hatchery: Nurturing Creative Writers of Color** – Jan. 12, 6 p.m. and Feb. 9, 6 p.m.

**Poem Jam, Afrofuturist Edition** – Jan. 14, 6 p.m.

**Black Crime Writers – Celebrating the Past, Looking Toward the Future** – Jan. 19, 6 p.m.

**Diane Ferlatte** – Jan. 26, 7 p.m.

**Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power** – Feb. 3, 7 p.m.

**Book Club: World Literature, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*** – Feb. 4, 6 p.m.

**Nature Boost: Faces of Resistance, a partnership with the National Park Service** – Feb. 10, 12 p.m.

**Black Joy and Resistance with photographer Adreinne Waheed and poet Staceyann Chin** – Feb. 10, 3 p.m.

**Cheryl Derricotte and Ramekon O'Arwisters** – Feb. 16, 7 p.m.

**Melissa Valentine, *The Names of All the Flowers*** – Feb. 17, 6 p.m.

**Mail Art with MoAD** – Feb. 19, 2 p.m.



Unique Derique

## Night of Ideas Reimagined

**O**n February 1, 2020, more than 5,200 revelers from all corners of the Bay Area, and even as far as Portland, Oregon, flocked to the Main Library to enjoy a seven-hour marathon of speakers and performances at the second Night of Ideas. Who knew our lives would change so dramatically shortly after this event, so filled with a sense of community and the creative and innovative spirit that makes San Francisco such a beloved city? While we can't gather in person this year, the Library and its partners, California Humanities, KQED, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Villa San Francisco, are not going to let COVID-19 prevent the third Night of Ideas from being both memorable and meaningful. The show will go on!

The Night of Ideas is sponsored by the Institut Français and takes place on the same evening in cities around the globe. This year's virtual format is designed to spur contemplation on the 2021 theme *Closing the Distance*, an adaptation of the international theme *proche*, or "close." Hosted by KQED Forum's Mina Kim, the program will present a variety of perspectives on how we can collectively move closer to a better future by reimagining our civic spaces to be more inclusive and by advancing racial equity. This year's Night of Ideas, which will be broadcast globally from France, is also designed to bring people closer to our City and to the people who make it special. Expect to see performances featuring some of our most iconic scenery and tributes to our artists and essential workers who have kept our spirits up during these challenging times. We hope you will join us and your neighbors to share this wonderful night together. Visit [nightofideasf.com](http://nightofideasf.com).



Photo: Alexander Lim, courtesy of KQED

**The show will go on!**

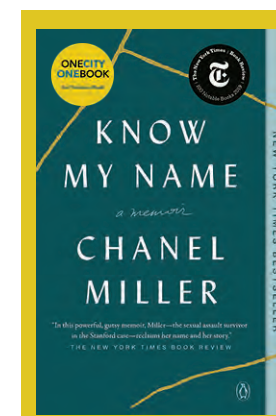
**Night of Ideas** – Jan. 28, 7 p.m.

## Nature Boost: Every Kid in a Park

**H**ey parents of 4th and 5th graders, did you know your family has free access to national parks? Join NPS Ranger Mariajosé to learn more and start planning your outdoor adventure together. Find out more: [everykidoutdoors.gov/index.htm](http://everykidoutdoors.gov/index.htm).



**Nature Boost** – Jan. 7, 2 p.m.



**One City One Book** discussions kick off the first Sunday in January! Request your copy now and get ready to join the conversation. Visit [sfpl.org/one-city-one-book](http://sfpl.org/one-city-one-book) for more information.

**ONECITY ONEBOOK**

San Francisco Reads

### Coming Up:

**Feb. 16, 7 p.m.**  
Artists Cheryl Derricotte and Ramekon O'Arwisters in conversation

**Feb. 17, 6 p.m.**  
Author: Melissa Valentine, *The Names of All the Flowers*

**Feb. 18, 6 p.m.**  
Workshop: Hambone, The Body Drum and The Rhythm Connection

**Feb. 25, 5 p.m.**  
Effe Lee Morris Annual Lecture with Jason Reynolds. Author of *Ghost* and co-author of *Stamped: Racism, Anti-Racism and You*.

# Events, Collections and Services

## Help Your Neighbors in Need



Photo: Elisabeth Fall

During the COVID-19 pandemic, San Franciscans have stepped up to help their neighbors. You've helped people access food, provided basic necessities and checked in on their well-being. San Francisco Public Library is supporting Mayor London Breed's call to keep the generosity going by volunteering and donating to local organizations. Your contributions of time and money will help others weather this storm. Last summer, fully half of the Library's staff was deployed as Disaster Service Workers serving in a variety of capacities, from contact tracing, hotel and test site monitors and at the San Francisco-Marín Food Bank, preparing thousands of boxes a day to ensure that families in our city did not go hungry. With many City workers returning to work and with COVID-fatigue setting in, the Food Bank is in desperate need of more volunteers. You can learn more about how to get involved by visiting [sfmfoodbank.org](http://sfmfoodbank.org). The City has also compiled a one-stop shop resource for how and where to volunteer to make the most impact during this time. Visit [sf.gov/volunteer-and-donate-holiday-season](http://sf.gov/volunteer-and-donate-holiday-season) to start making a difference today.



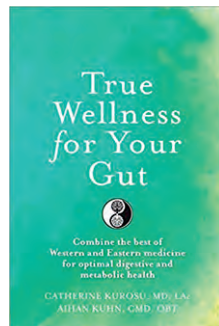
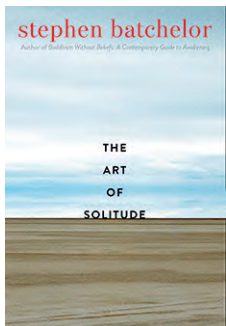
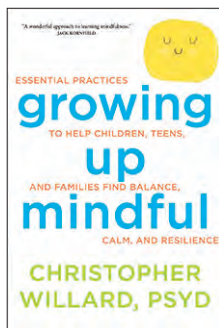
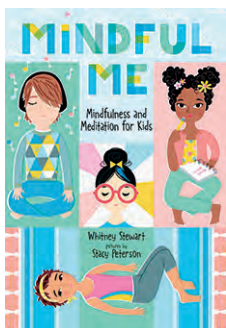
## Get a Head Start on the 2021 Job Market

The Business, Science and Technology Department's (BST) *Work it* series has the resources you need to find work, return to the workforce, make a career change, improve your personal finances, start or expand a business and more. We assembled a vast array of online options for you where you can find job and career support, learn how to budget, save and invest or work on your business.

Also, don't forget to check out our BST databases. You will find support for business research, investing, computer education, consumer information and more.

In addition, local experts will support your needs through our Virtual Library programs. They offer support for resume writing, interviewing, how to apply for State jobs, as well as work at local nonprofits and other community-based organizations in San Francisco. Reference Solutions offers monthly programs on their robust database. This month, you'll see programs such as *How to Ace Your Next Interview*, focusing on tips for 50+ job seekers. *Resumes for Transitioning to New Opportunities* covers ways to frame your skills for a new career. SF Reserve's First Impressions present about their program, which matches talented, skilled older adults and people with disabilities with paid part-time and project-based work. The Senior Community Service Employment Program presents their job-readiness program that helps older adults transition from on-the-job training back into the work force for full-time or part-time employment. Lastly, our financial educators, Carly Matthews and Alex Caswell continue their popular money management series with *How to Budget and Save for Your Future*. Stay current with upcoming *Work it* events.

Subscribe to our monthly newsletter, visit us virtually at the Business, Science and Technology Center and check out our databases: [sfpl.org/work-it](http://sfpl.org/work-it).



The Wellness Series

## Find Your Ground with Wellness Resources

Let the Library help you find a positive and affirming start to the new year with eResources available instantly from Hoopla, Kanopy and Overdrive. From eBooks to eAudiobooks, this list is just the beginning. Reach out to your trusty librarian at (415) 557-4400 for more recommendations about meditation and wellness materials for kids, teens, families and adults.

***Mindful Me: Mindfulness and Meditation for Kids* by Whitney Stewart**

***Growing Up Mindful: Essential Practices to Help Children, Teens, and Families Find Balance, Calm, and Resilience* by Christopher Willard**

***The Art of Solitude* by Stephen Batchelor**

***The Wellness Series* by Alan Chiost**

***True Wellness for Your Gut* by Catherine Kurosu and Aihan Kuhn**

### get social!

SFPL.ORG

facebook.com/sfpl.org

twitter.com/SFPublicLibrary

instagram.com/sfpubliclibrary

youtube.com/user/SanFranciscoLibrary

## Support Our Community by Volunteering in 2021



Caring for our community in 2020 largely meant keeping our distance, but in 2021, we can connect through virtual volunteering. The Library is currently recruiting for two tutoring programs.

Did you know that half of 3rd and 4th graders in San Francisco do not read at grade level? Our FOG Reader volunteers are trained to help a struggling child by using the Orton-Gillingham methodology to help students, typically 1st-4th graders, move away from guessing or skipping words by breaking words into more manageable chunks, and by building vocabulary through reading together.

To welcome and support immigrants in our community, ESL tutors are trained to work with an adult learner on their individual English language goals, such as improving conversational English, practicing for job interviews or tackling paperwork.

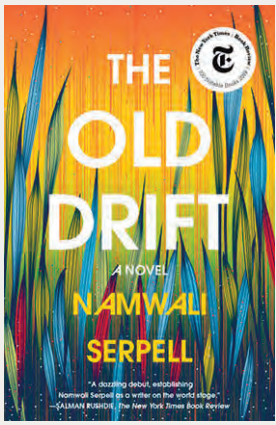
For more information and upcoming training dates, please write [volunteer@sfpl.org](mailto:volunteer@sfpl.org).

## El derecho al acceso a servicios en tu idioma / Learn About Your Right to Access Services in Your Language

En los E.U. hay leyes federales, estatales y locales sobre proveer servicios públicos en el idioma que hablan las personas. En SF, se requiere que los departamentos de la Ciudad brinden acceso a servicios en inglés, chino, español y filipino. Conoce más de esto con OCEIA, CARECEN y SFPL, incluyendo cómo abogar por tus derechos de acceso a servicios en español. Programa en español.

In the U.S., there are federal, state and local laws regarding the provision of public services in the language that people speak. In San Francisco, City departments are required to provide access to services in English, Chinese, Spanish and Filipino. Learn more about this with OCEIA, CARECEN and SFPL, including how to advocate for your rights to access services in Spanish. Program in Spanish.

**Tus derechos al acceso a servicios en tu idioma** – Ene./Jan. 25, 6 p.m.  
Reservaciones/Reservations: [bit.ly/2acceso](http://bit.ly/2acceso)



ON the  
SAME  
PAGE

[January/February  
Selection:](#)

## *The Old Drift* by Namwali Serpell

Author Namwali Serpell, born in Zambia, uses that nation as the canvas for her epic work. The structure of this rambunctious debut novel follows three very different families, intertwined over three generations. The children and grandchildren come together in tragic, absurd and inevitable ways, tracing Zambia's path through history. And the book is not shy about its ambition and reach: love meets Afrofuturism, marries into magical realism, entwines with historical fiction and is fused with speculative fiction.

The novel covers much ground, zigzagging back and forth through Africa and Europe, family to family, children to children. The reader follows and drifts along the matrilineal heritage, which is how the book is organized: grandmothers, daughters, granddaughters. Serpell begins, however, with a grandfather, a British photographer, making a living near Victoria Falls, slightly over 100 years ago.

Inexplicable actions here propel a drift through love, disease, space programs; a blending of strange, vivid fiction with actual Zambian history. The saga concludes in the near future, involving digital embedded devices, drones and new vaccines. Serpell, who taught writing at UC Berkeley for more than 10 years and is currently an English professor at Harvard, has given us a lush, vibrant and inventive saga that we're proud to recommend.



Namwali Serpell

**The Old Drift On the Same Page Book Club** – Feb. 22, 7 p.m.

## Celebrate Artists of Color at the Black & Brown Comix Arts Festival

**T**he Black & Brown Comix Arts Festival (BCAF) is a free, annual three-day festival that celebrates the creativity of People of Color in the comic arts and popular visual culture and happens during the MLK Day weekend. This year's events will happen online, but will offer the same fantastic programming as our in-person events. Once again, we offer kids activities, film screenings, panels and conversations, with the best and brightest in comic arts and pop culture. Featured artists include David F. Walker, premiering his most recent graphic novel *The Black Panther Party: A Graphic Novel History*. He'll be joined by Fredrika Newton, widow of Black Panther Party founder Huey Newton, to discuss the importance of this shared local history. Illustrator and cartoonist Tim Fielder will share his most recent graphic novel, *Infinitum: An Afrofuturist Tale*. Also joining us is Ashley Woods, comic book artist and writer, recognized for her work on the *Niobe*, *Lady Castle* and *Tomb Raider* series, and most recently, HBO's *Lovecraft Country*.

**Black & Brown Comix Arts Festival** – Jan. 16–18, 12–5 p.m.  
Visit [bcafcon.sfmlkday.org](http://bcafcon.sfmlkday.org) for more information.

## Your New Superheroes: Black and Brown Comix Arts Festival

SFPL is excited to launch the Black and Brown Comix Arts Festival (BCAF), a new digital comic book platform with titles that focus on culturally diverse characters and storylines. The BCAF catalog includes colorful works from DC Comics, Marvel and Lion Forge publishers, such as *Accell*, *Black Panther* and *Ms. Marvel*. BCAF showcases some of the vast illustrated work featured at the annual Black and Brown Comix Arts Festival, a Bay Area expo that celebrates the creativity of artists of color in the comic arts and popular visual culture. The festival is organized by the Northern California Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Foundation, a public charitable organization dedicated to programs and events that promote social, economic and environmental justice. "Libraries are essential to the joy of reading and enabling access to materials that are often out of reach for many people," says BCAF's co-founder Aaron Grizzell. "Comic books are a great access point to increasing literacy. We are excited to be partnering with the San Francisco Public Library in launching the BCAF service."

**BCAF.DIGITAL**

Check out your new superheroes at the Black and Brown Comix Arts Festival, [sfpl.bcaf.digital](http://sfpl.bcaf.digital).



Martin Yan

## Wok with Chef Martin Yan

San Francisco's own Chef Martin Yan helps us celebrate the Lunar New Year at home by providing a virtual cooking class suitable for all cooks, young to old, if "Yan Can Cook, So Can You!"

Chef Martin Yan has WOWed audiences from Shanghai to San Francisco for more than 40 years on American Public Television, promoting Chinese and Asian cuisine. Making it easy for home cooks has been his lifelong mission.

Since 1978, Chef Yan has hosted the Yan Can Cook show on PBS—one of the longest-running cooking and traveling programs on television today—has written 30 cookbooks and is founder and chef of M.Y. China in San Francisco.

**Wok with Chef Martin Yan** – Jan. 29, 2 p.m.

Reserve: [sfpl-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_MQJEkxHxRCuGH0TQXJfNw](https://sfpl-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_MQJEkxHxRCuGH0TQXJfNw)



Lynne Sachs

## Poet Leads Writing and Reflection Workshop

Acclaimed poet and filmmaker Lynne Sachs leads a two-part poetry workshop. First, Sachs reads from her recent book *Year by Year Poems*, a collection of 50 poems which began as a half-century marker in the author's life. Sachs will also screen her film, *Tip of My Tongue*, which was based on these same poems. After the screening, participants will be encouraged to write one poem in response to a chosen year in their own lives. In the second workshop, participants are invited to return with their new writing to share with each other and the public. Each participant may read their poem responding to a year in their own life, and Sachs will facilitate a discussion.

**Lynne Sachs** is a filmmaker and poet who explores the intricate relationship between personal observations and broader historical experiences. She has made 35 films which have screened at the New York Film Festival, the Sundance Film Festival and the Museum of Modern Art. Her celebrated *Year by Year Poems* feature graceful, diaristic poems that distill events and themes in the poet's life and simultaneously, magically, reflect larger movements of history and culture.

**Lynne Sachs, "Everything That Surrounds Us Becomes Part of Us"** – Jan. 21, 6 p.m.; Jan. 28, 6 p.m.



Kayla Minton  
Kaufman

## Fresh Play Reading Series Goes Virtual

Enjoy theater right from the comforts of your own home. Acclaimed theater director Kayla Minton Kaufman and talented local actors perform a dramatic reading of *Straight Nonsense*, a brand new play by playwright Lindsay Ford. In *Straight Nonsense*, "Christian Girl Autumn" meets *The L Word*. January's production marks the happy resumption of Kaufman's Fresh Sunday Play Reading Series, a bimonthly series that presents dramatic readings of original works. If you love live theater, you won't want to miss this event.

**Kayla Minton Kaufman** is a director who has worked in institutions across the nation. Of her Fresh Play Reading Series, Kaufman says that she "loves work that celebrates diversity, provokes discussion and makes audiences laugh or cry (or just remember how to be human)."

**Lindsay Ford** is a lesbian Bay Area actress and playwright with an expressed interest in making the mundane extraordinary.

**Fresh Play Sunday Reading Series** – Jan. 17, 2 p.m. Reserve: [bit.ly/34qzHvg](https://bit.ly/34qzHvg).  
Youtube link: [youtu.be/koKTuthu2kc](https://youtu.be/koKTuthu2kc).

# Announcing 2020 Writers Sprint Winners



**T**een writers logged in on a rainy November afternoon to participate in the student-led Writers Sprint. Sophomores, Sophia Peckner and Breanna Lau inspired SF teens and beyond to submit essays related to two prompts in a two-hour time period.

## The prompts were:

- I have a secret to tell.
- My eyes have been opened.

The Library received submissions that ranged in topics that included a fantastical trip to an extraterrestrial planet, historical fiction voyage to meet Queen Elizabeth and the first sight of a tree in a future dystopian world.

Congratulations to Grand Prize winner, Faith Hardin, a 14-year-old homeschooled ninth grader with "Sacrifice," a fast-paced inside look at an assassin's first job. An honorable mention goes to Marlena Rohde, a 15-year-old tenth grader at Lowell High School with "Fish Out of Water," an introspective connection between a jellyfish, pigeon and a broken family. An honorable mention goes to Yasmin Suzani, a 17-year-old in the eleventh grade at Los Altos High School for "Night Walk," describing the beauty of a 4 a.m. walk. You can read the essays at Teen Made—[themixatsfpl.org/teen-made](http://themixatsfpl.org/teen-made). Thank you to Sophia Peckner and Breanna Lau for their hard work in realizing this opportunity as a creative outlet. Need inspiration for your own essay? For writing tips and techniques offered by Dyllen Nellis or MYEEP view the event on YouTube: [youtu.be/E6RBCPT6O4g](https://youtu.be/E6RBCPT6O4g).



**Marlena Rohde** is in the tenth grade at Lowell High School. She loves to read and write, especially while surrounded by nature. Her true passion is marine biology, which is often expressed in her stories.

## Fish Out of Water

Jellyfish were not meant to be kept in small tanks, in small rooms of large houses. Jellyfish were never supposed to be taken out of the widest expanse of water in the world and be put into the homes of unhappy children. My jellyfish was a bribe. A tacky way for my father to apologize for bringing me to his new house with his new wife; for dragging me from the city to an endless sea of grassy emerald slopes. I didn't mind the switch, whether or not it came with a jellyfish. I may have resented my stepmother, but at least in such a large house there would be distance between the two of us.

I placed the final pink pillow on my new coral-colored bed and opened my windows to admire the velvety clouds that hung over the green slopes. I took a deep breath of the new air, which was tainted with the fumes of gasoline and fertilizer. I sagged onto the silky sheets of my bed to watch the jellyfish dance around its tiny tank. It really was a beautiful creature.

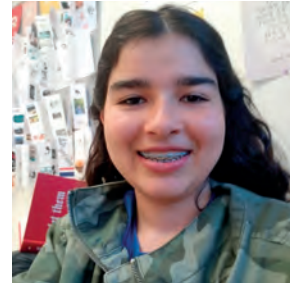
A subtle flap of wings sounded from my window sill and I averted my gaze from the jelly. A pigeon was perched on the brink of the window, peering in at me with hungry eyes. It was a scrappy bird, missing toes; a remnant of my fifteen years spent in the city. I stared at the pigeon for a moment, hoping it would see itself out of my room. It cocked its head at me with the same expectation, claiming my window as its roost like an old man claims his favorite rocking chair. With a hasty motion I tried to scare the pigeon back into the outside world, but it instead ascended to the innermost corner of my pink room.

I anxiously turned my vision towards the jellyfish, whose tank was wide open without the lid that broke in the moving van. The pigeon followed my vision.

Without taking my eyes off the bird I called for my father. No response. He was often out with his new wife, barely at home even when we lived in our little apartment.

In another panicked movement I startled the bird again, and suddenly I was surrounded by a flurried hurricane of feathers, beaks, and my own flailing arms, as the accursed bird descended upon me. I screamed and covered my eyes as the flapping of wings grew louder, so close that I could feel a downy finger brush my ear. I fell into a small ball, collapsing in on myself as the noise of the pigeon grew quieter and quieter until it had ceased.

[Read the full essay on themixatsfpl.org/teen-made.](http://themixatsfpl.org/teen-made)



**Yasmin Suzani** is an eleventh-grade student at Los Altos High School. In her spare time, she likes playing guitar, DnD (Dungeons & Dragons) and video games.

## Night Walk

4:00 AM is the most beautiful time

The cool air bites my cheeks  
keeping the monsters away  
With its bared teeth,  
Welcoming me to be devoured by  
The beauty in its frost

The dark air lets me be unseen,  
Anonymous,  
Freeing me.

I am  
Free from the shackles of society  
Free from those who want to lock me in a room  
Filled with books I am to read  
And words I am to write  
And ideas I am to think.  
In the darkness,  
I am  
Nothing of importance,  
Just another shadow hidden away

The hollow air belongs to me.  
It belongs to the vaporization of my breath  
It exists to carry the sound of my footsteps  
It exists to carry the light to guide my way.

They don't turn the streetlights off at night  
Their incandescent yellow bounces off the ground,  
Cutting through the dark,  
In a surprisingly comforting way.

I walk along a four-lane road  
Alone

The passing of a car or two every few minutes  
Is the only thing telling me that this is indeed real  
It's as real as the sound of the beating of my heart  
Against an empty night.

I like watching my streets during the witching hour,  
They keep me safe,  
Allowing me to observe every simple detail,  
Allowing me to discover the beauty in places I wouldn't see during the day

It's time to wander  
Tonight's a night to go west,  
Back to the old park  
Where we used to  
Walk in the creek,  
Mystified at the summer days when it wasn't filled with water,  
At the days when it was a forbidden path to follow.  
That wonder we had is gone.  
It's never filled with water anymore.

Still, I have not seen that creek  
Through the lens of the night,  
The lens that restores the wonder to everything  
So I continue my journey,  
Knowing it will come to a fruitful end

[Read the full essay on themixatsfpl.org/teen-made.](http://themixatsfpl.org/teen-made)



**Faith Hardin** is a Freshman who has been homeschooled her whole life. In her free time, she enjoys reading, writing, gardening and baking. Her favorite part of school is reading (and writing about) classic literature. Faith aspires to be a librarian or pursue a career in psychiatry/therapy.

## Sacrifice

She opened her eyes. The dim light pointed at her appeared blindingly bright, after her long wait in the darkness.

"Are you ready?" asked a voice.

Elara didn't hesitate. "I am ready." She had been ready for years. Her whole life had been centered around her career. And now she could take her first task, to dictate whether she had the strength to continue. Or the weakness to fail. But she couldn't stop. Fail, and be killed.

"Here." The dim light was adjusted, and Elara could see a hologram of a middle-aged man. "Here is your target."

She nodded briefly. "Suicide, or an accident?"

"It will be a mysterious disappearance. Dispose of the body in a way that cannot be discovered. Leave no evidence."

"I won't," Elara responded quietly. She mentally ran through the ways she could accomplish this.

"He won't be traveling alone," her employer's spokesperson warned.

"Bodyguards? Associates?"

"His family."

Elara felt a small twinge of emotion in her gut. It was quickly quenched. Assassins did not feel. She had spent much of her training in teaching herself to suppress inconvenient things such as emotion. She had not felt the pain of a conscience in years.

"And?"

"Kill them too. They will not keep quiet."

"I will." Elara was once again cold and professional. "Not a word of the affair will get out."

"Yes. You have your information. It is waiting at your place of residence."

She wasn't surprised. She didn't know where she was, or exactly who her employer was. Just that she had been brought to this place, and she was being payed by most likely a government official. The fact that this man knew where she lived and how to get her the information she needed in a safe, secure way, seemed plainly obvious.

"I will do my job. Aris Xan will be dead by the time you ask."

.....

When Elara arrived at her home, a file of papers was waiting, as expected. Primitive. It was only as she lifted them that Elara realized the cunning. One could not hack into a simple manila folder. Once destroyed, paper could never be recovered. It was easier to eliminate this paper trail.

The assassin quickly skimmed her information. She stopped at a snapshot of her victim. A prominent figure in the Underground, the stress of his occupation showed. Yet though his face was finely lined from pain and stress, there were also smile lines. Lines by his eyes, left from much laughter. Creases, all of which indicated a depth of his personality.

Elara snapped the folder shut abruptly. She needed just enough information that she could use it. Identify the target. Eliminate his companions. Finish her job.

Just like she had trained for. Like she had been taught for years. As he had taught her.

No. Elara forced her thoughts away from the only semblance of family she had had. Her surrogate father. Killer of her family. But protector of her life. Who was now dead.

She knew her assignment would go better. She would be unharmed, and her victim would have vanished. He and his family would be gone without a trace, a few documents the only evidence that they had ever lived on Earth.

She would not fail. She would do as she had been taught.

.....

"Daddy, why are we walking?" piped up a small child hanging from his father's hand. "We don't ever walk places. Is this different?"

"No, sweetie. We're just moving. We're walking because this is an adventure," Aris Xan's voice was hushed. Despite his reassuring words, his gaze darted around every few seconds. He was perfectly aware of how much he was wanted. He exchanged a significant look with his wife, who was walking on his other side and carrying a young girl, barely more than a toddler.

"Why are we moving, Daddy?" asked the little boy after a moment of silence. "I like home. It's nice."

"We're going to a new place," said his mother. "It'll be nice too. It will keep us safe. From the bad guys?"

Xan paused, clearly thinking on whether to tell his children the truth. "...Yes. From the bad guys. They won't get us."

Elara, observing all of this from her vantage point, almost laughed at the cruel irony of the situation. In running away, the rebel was simply putting his family in further danger and making it easier for all of them to be killed.

Yet he didn't know. He walked onto the set stage. Everything was laid out.

"Target spotted?" spoke a voice in her ear.

Elara reached up to press an earpiece. "Yes," she muttered. "I need to move closer. His wife and two children are with him."

"Remember— make sure there is no trace left."

Elara bit back a retort. The small family was traveling through a wasteland toward a pickup point. Elara could have used an explosion to kill her victims and the difference to the landscape wouldn't have been remarkable.

Yet her duty was to simply kill the man and his family. Then move on. Collect payment, forget the whole thing had ever happened, and wait for her next job.

The young woman crept forward silently, tuning out the continued chatter of her target's children. The children which were also her targets. Every piece of advice, every teaching from her father, rang through head. Her first mission. She had to succeed.

Elara passed the group, and found a convenient spot. One shot, and her main target was dead. The rest would be easy to get. She had him just about in the right place. A few more steps... And just as she was about to pull the trigger—

The boom and shake of an explosion threw her off. Debris flew everywhere, and the only thing Elara could do at that second was huddle behind the shelter she had been using to hide.

As the dust cleared, an upright figure could be seen, passing through the rubble, searching.

Elara straightened. Who could have—

"You!" she spat as her eyes widened, then narrowed, with recognition. "What are you doing here?"

"I could ask you the same question," replied a thin man easily. He spoke in an accented voice.

"Diros, you know exactly why I'm here. Leave. He sent you to make sure I did my job, didn't he?"

Diros snorted. "As if I'd just leave. Look, I'm here to keep an eye on you. You weren't doing it, so I did."

"I was about to."

"He was walking and talking. If a target is walking and talking, that generally means the assassin failed. Be glad I was here to back you up."

Before Elara could respond with something quite rude and probably unwise, the rubble stirred. Both assassins ran towards the spot.

Miraculously, the entire family was still alive. Bruised and bleeding, but alive.

Aris Xan stumbled to his feet. He shoved a youngster behind him and, though his stance was shaky, faced the people meant to be his killers.

Elara tensed, waiting for him to attack one of them, run, or plead for his life.

The man fell to his knees. "Kill me. But let my family go."

Elara stiffened.

Diros smiled cruelly. "The first part of that sounds good. The second half..." He shrugged, then gestured to Elara. "You may kill him."

Elara moved her hand to the hilt of a dagger. One move. It would be so easy. Yet—

"Elara! Don't be like your father," Diros warned. "Finish the job."

Elara rounded on him. "He always finished his jobs! His last target was dead before he was."

The assassin facing her snorted. "That's not what I meant. He was unable to finish one. Too weak. You know he killed your family."

Elara glared at Diros. "I know."

"He failed to kill you."

A sharp intake of breath.

.....

"Not my daughter! Please don't kill Elara! Just kill me!" Her real father. Pleading.

The man who had been a father to her from that point in her life on. Hesitant.

A few moments later, as a body fell to the ground, the assassin crossed the room. Stooped, and picked up a baby.

.....

"Fine! I'll do it!" Diros exclaimed.

Elara, brought back to the present, reached defensively for her dagger, but Diros had one of his own.

He drew back his arm.

With a flash of thought, Elara threw her body forward. She felt searing pain, and saw a hilt protruding from her sternum.

Everyone gaped in shock. Diros paused long enough for Elara to reach for her blade. A moment later, the assassin fell too.

Aris Xan knelt beside the young woman meant to be his killer.

"Why?" he asked brokenly.

A ghost of a smile appeared on Elara's face. "All my life I was taught my duty. To take life. Like that was the right thing to do."

"And?"

"And it's not. I was blind. But my eyes have been opened."





## Happy New Year and Happy 60th Anniversary to Friends of the Library

Founded in 1961, Friends embodies the collective community spirit that fights for robust public library funding and donates private funds to augment City funding, ensuring that all people have equitable access to the resources they need. Friends has been doing this work for 60 years! We look forward to celebrating this anniversary with you all year long.

### Transitions on the Board of Directors

Several key members of Friends' Board completed their terms of services at the end of 2020. Completing six-year teams are David Stringer-Calvert and Jay Auslander. David, Deputy General Counsel at SRI International, served as the Chair of the Board for three years, providing wisdom, guidance and a sympathetic ear to the Executive Director (*I could not live without you, David – Marie*). Jay, Director of Development at the Contemporary Jewish Museum, has blessed us with his fundraising expertise, especially in building our planned and estate giving program.

Another nonprofit professional in fundraising for more than 40 years, Katherine Bella wraps up four years on our Board. Kathy, Chief Strategy Officer at PRC, was recently awarded the prestigious Hank Rosso Outstanding Fundraising Professional Award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) Golden Gate Chapter. All three led us through a dynamic period of transition at Friends, including the five-year strategic plan and campaign that lights our way through the pandemic and in the future.

Serving on a nonprofit board requires an enormous personal commitment of time, energy and soul. We will miss seeing you around the table. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

In January, we welcome a new member to the Board of Directors: Diane Gibson. Diane has a distinguished litigation career at Squire Patton Boggs (U.S.) LLP and served on the Board of Directors of Legal Community Against Violence (now Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence) for more than ten years. Diane is already a member of the Friends' Advocacy Committee. We look forward to welcoming her as a full Board member.

### Friends Welcomes Its New Director of Philanthropy



Kimberley Drew

We are delighted to announce the selection of our new Director of Philanthropy, Kimberley Drew. Drew brings a wide breadth of strategic, operations and fundraising experience in leadership positions. Most immediately, Drew was the Vice President, Program Operations for Springboard. She spent seven years at Jewish Vocational Service as Strategic Initiatives Leader and Vice President of Business Development. These jobs make her an expert in career development services and experiences that will be a great asset to the Library as we move through this recession.

After obtaining her BA from Boston College and her MBA from Harvard Business School, Drew worked in business consulting at Charles Schwab and Catalysts Strategies. Some of you may know Drew as a former Board Member of Friends, 2006-2012, Board Chair, 2010-2012 and Noe Valley Library Renovation Campaign Chair, 2002-2008.

*"We could not have found a better fit than Kim. Her professional experience speaks for itself. We also gained a lifelong, dedicated library advocate, not just in words, but in years of action and deep-hearted commitment to the SFPL. We could not be happier than to welcome Kim back to the family."*  
**– Marie Ciepiela, Executive Director**

"I'm thrilled to be joining the Friends at this critical moment for the Library and our community. As we navigate the pandemic and economic recovery, Friends' partnership with the Library will be essential to ensuring that everyone has access to the information, resources, and opportunities they need to thrive. I'm excited to work together with the wonderful Friends staff, board and membership, to continue to strengthen San Francisco's premier public library system," said Drew.

We welcome the new year and our new team members!

### Friends Bookstore

Friends' Bookstore and Donation Center are temporarily

closed. Visit [FriendsSFPL.org](http://FriendsSFPL.org) for updates. Friends staff are currently observing Shelter in Place.

Donate to Friends at [FriendsSFPL.org/Support](http://FriendsSFPL.org/Support)

### get social! with Friends

[facebook.com/friendssfpl](https://facebook.com/friendssfpl)

[twitter.com/friendssfpl](https://twitter.com/friendssfpl)

[instagram.com/friendssfpl](https://instagram.com/friendssfpl)

Stay connected with all the latest happenings, events, and deals at Friends!



The mission of Friends of the San Francisco Public Library is to create, steward and support a superior, free public library system in San Francisco. We are committed to raising the standard of excellence of our libraries by funding programs and services beyond what is allocated in the city's budget. We believe in free and equal access to information for all.

## Help Our Local Independent Bookstores Recover from COVID-19 Closures and Get 10% Off

Friends members (\$60+ level) receive a 10% discount at the following bookstores:

- A. Cavalli Italian Bookstore ■ Academy Store, California Academy of Science ■ Adobe Bookstore ■ Alan Wofsy Fine Arts LLC ■
- Alexander Book Co., Inc ■ Alley Cat Books ■ Amazing Fantasy ■ The Beat Museum ■ Bird & Beckett Books & Records ■ Bolerium Books
- Books, Inc. ■ Booksmith ■ Borderlands Books ■ Christopher's Books ■ Chronicle Books ■ Compass Books, Inc. ■
- Dog Eared Books ■ Eastwind Books ■ Globus Slavic Bookstore ■ Green Apple Books & Music ■ The Green Arcade
- Louie Brothers Book Store, Inc. ■ Marcus Book Stores ■ Omnivore Books on Food ■ San Francisco Botanical Gardens, Garden Bookstore ■

# AT THE LIBRARY

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY  
100 LARKIN STREET  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102

## January 2021

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# MORE THAN A MONTH

## Black History, Culture & Heritage

- 2021 -

*“To know the past is to know the present.  
To know the present is to know yourself.”*

– Ibram X. Kendi, “Introduction,”  
*Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You*

*The San Francisco Public Library system is  
dedicated to free and equal access to information,  
knowledge, independent learning and the joys  
of reading for our diverse community.*

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Online version: [sfpl.org/atl](http://sfpl.org/atl)

### How to reach us

San Francisco Public Library  
100 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102  
Phone hours: Monday – Saturday, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m.  
and Sunday, 12-5:30 p.m.  
(415) 557-4400  
(415) 557-4433 (TTY)  
Public Affairs email: [publicaffairs@sfpl.org](mailto:publicaffairs@sfpl.org)  
Website: [sfpl.org](http://sfpl.org)

During the library closure, staff are available to assist by  
email or phone (TIP Line) Monday - Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.  
and Sunday, 12-6 p.m.  
Online: Ask for eBook assistance or email [info@sfpl.org](mailto:info@sfpl.org)  
TIP Line: (415) 557-4400

**eBook Assistance:**  
[sfpl.org/books-and-media/ebook-collections](http://sfpl.org/books-and-media/ebook-collections)

### Visit Our Virtual Library!

We offer many opportunities for eLearning. Build  
valuable job skills or work on your resume, get one-on-  
one tutoring and homework help, all from your home.

For additional event and registration info, visit  
[sfpl.org/virtual-library](http://sfpl.org/virtual-library), [sfpl.org/kids/virtual-library](http://sfpl.org/kids/virtual-library)  
and [sfpl.org/teen-virtual-library](http://sfpl.org/teen-virtual-library).



San Francisco Public Library

## SFPL To Go Locations

Information line for all library questions:  
(415) 557-4400.

**Main Library** 100 Larkin Street  
Monday–Saturday: 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m.,  
Sunday: 12–5:30 p.m.

### Branches

**Tuesday–Saturday: 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m.**

- ANZA 550 37th Ave.
- EXCELSIOR 4400 Mission St.
- EUREKA VALLEY/HARVEY MILK MEMORIAL  
1 José Sarria Court (at 16th St. near Market)
- MARINA 1890 Chestnut St.
- MERCED 155 Winston Drive
- MISSION BAY 960 Fourth St.

**Monday-Friday: 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m.**

- CHINATOWN 1135 Powell St.
- ORTEGA 3223 Ortega St.
- VISITACION VALLEY 201 Leland Ave.

### Bookmobiles

SFPL To Go-Go – Bookmobile Pop-up Pick-up  
Service

**Tuesdays and Thursdays: 2–6 p.m.**

- MIS Bookmobile at John O’Connell High School,  
Harrison and 20th Streets
- OMI Bookmobile at Jose Ortega Elementary  
School, 400 Sargent St.
- BAY Bookmobile at Willie Brown Jr. Middle  
School, Revere Ave. at Rankin St.

**Wednesdays: 2–6 p.m.**

- Treasure Island Bookmobile

