



# LIBRARY OF CONGRESS NATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL INDIANA PROGRAM GUIDE



## Invitation to Participate in the National Book Festival:

Indiana is home to a deep and rich literary heritage stemming from our long-ago classic writers like Gene Stratton-Porter and James Whitcomb Riley to the big names of the sixties and seventies – Kurt Vonnegut, Mari Evans, Etheridge Knight and many others – all the way up to today where everyone knows names like John Green and Meg Cabot plus characters like Clifford, Garfield and Raggedy Ann and Andy. It's impossible to keep track of a list of Indiana writers because new ones emerge and succeed daily. Today, Maurice Broaddus is writing Afrofuturist science fiction. Ashley C. Ford writes about race and body image. Kaveh Akbar's poetry has appeared in *The New Yorker*. Kelsey Timmerman's investigations lead to books about responsible consumerism. What draws all these voices together? Being from Indiana. Being Hoosiers.

Thankfully there are ample opportunities to celebrate our Indiana writers. The Indiana Authors Awards elevate Hoosier literary voices through prizes, programs and initiatives designed to connect readers to authors. Our Indiana media outlets frequently release stories and articles about top Hoosier writers, past and present. The Indiana Center for the Book even has a YouTube series where a "Hoosier Toucan" interviews contemporary Indiana authors, along with a light-hearted show and tell segment. That being said, it's especially exciting when Indiana authors get the chance to be showcased on a national, and indeed international, stage.

The National Book Festival is a premiere event in the literary calendar. During the course of its 20-year history, the Festival has become one of the most prominent literary events in the nation. Indiana libraries and cultural institutions can participate in the festival in a myriad of ways, from watch parties of author talks to having a book discussion about one of the featured speakers. The possibilities are endless. This toolkit encourages meaningful participation in the festival at a local level. Who better to present this national event to our local communities than the librarians, teachers and cultural leaders who connect to Hoosiers every day?

We invite you to use this toolkit to connect to the National Book Festival. Explore the writings of an author you've never heard of before. Learn more about the Library of Congress, your national library. Listen to a podcast interview in a group and discuss it afterwards. Share the ways you use the toolkit so that others can benefit from your creative ideas in the future. Above all, enjoy connecting with Hoosier literary heritage. The Golden Age of Indiana literature isn't in the past. **It's here right now.**



## **About the National Book Festival:**

The Library of Congress National Book Festival is an annual literary event that brings together best-selling authors, poets and illustrators with thousands of readers for book talks, panel discussions, book signings and other engaging activities. The National Book Festival was founded in 2001 by First Lady Laura Bush and then-Librarian of Congress James H. Billington. The first Festival was held on Sept. 8, 2001. During the years, the Festival has grown and evolved. It began on the Library of Congress grounds and in its buildings on Capitol Hill, expanding soon thereafter to the lawn of the Capitol and then to the National Mall. The Washington Convention Center has hosted the event in recent years, and in 2020 and 2021 the Festival went virtual. Attendance has skyrocketed from 25,000 in 2001 to more than 200,000 in 2019. The festival is funded by private donors and corporate sponsors who share the Library's commitment to reading and literacy. Since 2010, National Book Festival Co-Chairman David M. Rubenstein has been the festival's lead benefactor.

Indiana has participated in the festival in a variety of ways, primarily through selecting an "Indiana Book" to be featured in the Great Reads From Great Places line up and through participation in the Pavilion of the States; a grouping of more than 50 booths celebrating the unique personalities and attributes of the fifty states, the District of Columbia and the island territories.



## **National Book Festival Featured Writers from Indiana:**

Each year the National Book Festival features prominent writers from around the country and world. Unsurprisingly, several Hoosier writers are in the lineup this year: Jay Coles, Roxane Gay and Kekla Magoon.

**Coming soon! Check back after August 16, 2021.**  
**You can catch their talks at the following times:**

- Jay Coles
- Roxane Gay
- Kekla Magoon



# Jay Coles

Author of *Tyler Johnson Was Here*



## **About Jay Coles:**

Jay Coles is the author of the critically acclaimed *Tyler Johnson Was Here*, a composer with ASCAP and a professional musician residing in Muncie, Indiana. He is a graduate of Vincennes University and Ball State University and holds degrees in English and Liberal Arts. When he's not writing diverse books, he's advocating for them, serving with The Revolution church and composing music for various music publishers. Jay's forthcoming novel *Things We Couldn't Say* is set to be released 9.21.21 with Scholastic.

## **About Tyler Johnson Was Here:**

A stunning young adult novel about police brutality in modern American. When Marvin Johnson's twin brother Tyler goes to a party, Marvin decides to tag along to keep an eye on him. But what starts out as harmless fun turns into a shooting, followed by a police raid. The next day, Tyler is missing, and Marvin wants nothing more than to find his brother alive and safe. The chilling truth is that Tyler is dead; shot and killed by a police officer. Author Jay Coles wrote this book based on true personal events.

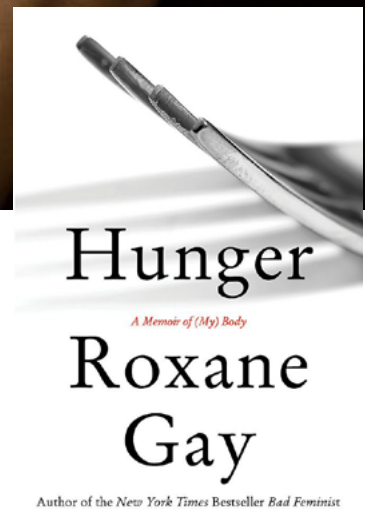
## **Discussion Questions for Tyler Johnson Was Here:**

1. How do you define justice? Discuss some examples of the injustices in your community. What do you think racial justice means?
2. What is the job of the police? Describe the relationship the police have with the people in your community.
3. What do you know about the Black Lives Matter movement? What are some other examples of political activism or social justice movements?
4. What is your perception of the American criminal justice system? What experiences have formed your view? What do you know about racial profiling? Police violence?



# Roxane Gay

Author of *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body*



## About Roxane Gay

Roxane Gay's writing appears in *Best American Mystery Stories 2014*, *Best American Short Stories 2012*, *Best Sex Writing 2012*, *A Public Space*, *McSweeney's*, *Tin House*, *Oxford American*, *American Short Fiction*, *Virginia Quarterly Review* and many others. She is a contributing opinion writer for *The New York Times*. She is the author of the books *Ayiti*, *An Untamed State*, the *New York Times*-bestselling *Bad Feminist*, the nationally bestselling *Difficult Women* and the *New York Times*-bestselling *Hunger*. She is also the author of *World of Wakanda* for Marvel. She has several books forthcoming and is also at work on television and film projects. She taught at Purdue University in Lafayette, Indiana for four years.

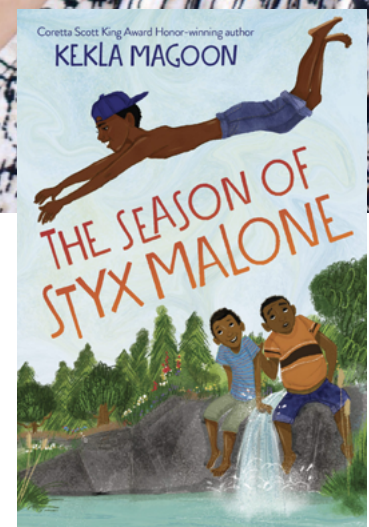
## About *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body*:

*New York Times*-bestselling author Roxane Gay has written with intimacy and sensitivity about food and bodies, using her own emotional and psychological struggles as a means of exploring our shared anxieties over pleasure, consumption, appearance and health. As a woman who describes her own body as “wildly undisciplined,” Roxane understands the tension between desire and denial, between self-comfort and self-care. In *Hunger*, she casts an insightful and critical eye on her childhood, teens and twenties—including the devastating act of violence that acted as a turning point in her young life—and brings readers into the present and the realities, pains and joys of her daily life.

## Discussion Questions for *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body*:

1. Gay was the victim of trauma when she was younger. How does that trauma play into her overeating?
2. Consider the views of other people. As Gay writes, “People see bodies like mine and make their assumptions. They think they know the why of my body. They do not.” What assumptions do you make of overweight people? What assumptions do you think people make (or might make) of you?
3. Talk about the paradox Gay points to: wanting acceptance for her body shape... yet wanting to change it. Can that tension ever be resolved — not just for overweight people but for anyone who doesn't fit the image of physical perfection our society worships?
4. Speaking of society: in what way does our cultural obsession with body shape contribute to Gay's (or, really, almost anyone's) sense of shame regarding the body?
5. Why does Gay denounce shows like *The Biggest Loser* and *Extreme Makeover: Weight Loss Edition*?





# Kekla Magoon

Author of *The Season of Styx Malone*

## About Kekla Magoon:

Kekla Magoon grew up in Fort Wayne, Indiana, but wanted to see the rest of the world. Now she travels all over the country meeting young readers and sharing her books, which include: *The Season of Styx Malone*; *The Highest Tribute: Thurgood Marshall's Life, Leadership and Legacy*; *The Rock and the River*; *How It Went Down*; and the *Robyn Hoodlum Adventure* series. She has received the Margaret A. Edwards Award, the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award, an Indiana Authors Award, the John Steptoe New Talent Award, three Coretta Scott King Honors, the Walter Award Honor, an NAACP Image Award and been long listed for the National Book Award. Kekla serves on the Writers' Council for the National Writing Project. Kekla holds a B.A. from Northwestern University and an M.F.A. in Writing from Vermont College of Fine Arts, where she now serves on faculty. Visit her online at [keklamagoon.com](http://keklamagoon.com), and you'll see: she is anything but ordinary!

## About Great Reads from Great Places:

Every year, [a list of books](#) representing the literary heritage of the 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands is distributed by the Library of Congress's Center for the Book during the National Book Festival. Each book is selected by a local Center for the Book or state library, and most are for children and young readers. Books may be written by authors from the state, take place in the state or celebrate the state's culture and heritage. Indiana's selection for 2021 is *The Season of Styx Malone* by Kekla Magoon. Kekla Magoon grew up in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and the book takes place in the fictional town of Sutton, Indiana.

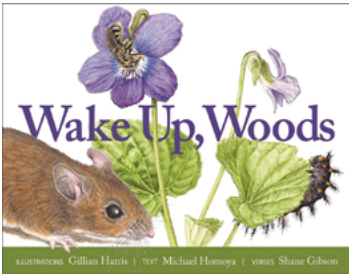
## About the 2021 Great Reads Selection: *The Season of Styx Malone*

In *The Season of Styx Malone*, Caleb wants to experience life beyond his small town in Indiana. With a whole summer of adventure before him, Caleb and his brother, Bobby Gene, encounter Styx Malone, a cool kid with some big secrets. The promise of the Great Escalator Trade (trading a small thing for something better on the way to reaching what you really want—in this case a scooter) tests the kids and their friendships as things get crazier than they ever imagined. Can it get any crazier than trading your baby sister for a bag of fireworks? Kekla Magoon's childhood experiences in Fort Wayne influenced the writing of the book. "I grew up in Fort Wayne... we didn't have woods, but we had a lot of trees, and we had that sense of, 'we're going out in the backyard, it's our space, it's separate from our parents.'" In this madcap, heartwarming, one-thing-leads-to-another adventure, friendships are forged, loyalties are tested... and miracles just might be possible.

## **Discussion Questions for *The Season of Styx Malone*:**

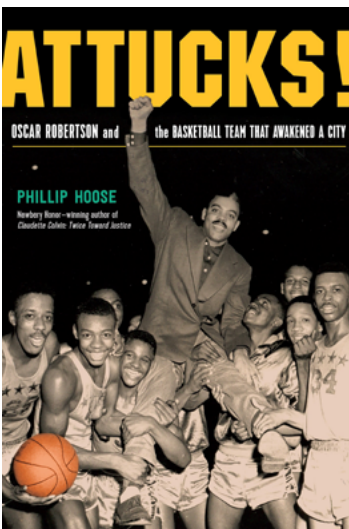
1. “Extraordinary” is a funny word. It takes two words “extra” and “ordinary” and puts them together to mean something completely different. When Caleb’s dad, who values ordinary people, tells Caleb that he is extraordinary, Caleb misunderstands the word and thinks his dad is saying that he is super boring. What do you think the word “extraordinary” means? Would you rather be ordinary or extraordinary? Why?
2. There’s a lot in this book about trading. First, Caleb and Bobby Gene trade their sister for some fireworks; then, Styx gets them to trade one thing for another until they get a moped. Have you ever traded anything? Did you get a fair deal? Did the other person? Was all the trading they did okay? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever had a friend that you admired and looked up to? Did you believe that Styx could do everything that he promised?
4. Why do you think that Caleb and Bobby Gene’s parents don’t want their children to associate with Styx? Do you think that they were being fair?
5. How did you feel when you learned that Caleb and Bobby Gene’s father reported Styx to Children’s Services? Why do you think he did it?
6. This book is a great adventure story, but it’s more than that. What else is this story about? Do the characters change? How?
7. Families are all different. Caleb and Bobby Gene live with their birth parents and their little sister. From Styx they learn that not all families are like theirs. Can you think of different kinds of families that you know? What do you think makes a family?

# Previous Great Reads Selections



## About the 2020 Great Reads Selection: ***Wake Up, Woods***

*Wake Up, Woods* pairs informational text with clever verses to inform and delight the reader about plants native to North American forests. *Wake Up, Woods* is not only written and illustrated by Hoosiers, but each of the plants highlighted in the book is native to Indiana and can be found in the springtime in parks and preserves – and even in shade gardens around yards. Detailed illustrations, lilting verses and scientific explanations make *Wake Up, Woods* an important text for anyone wanting to wake up to the wonder around them when visiting the woods. This is an excellent nature book to share with young readers and is perfect for the classroom, or to tuck in a backpack before a hike.



## About the 2019 Great Reads Selection: ***ATTUCKS: Oscar Robertson and the Basketball Team that Awakened a City***

By winning the state high school basketball championship in 1955, ten teens from an Indianapolis school meant to be the centerpiece of racially segregated education in the state shattered the myth of their inferiority. Their brilliant coach had fashioned an unbeatable team from a group of boys born in the South and raised in poverty. Anchored by the astonishing Oscar Robertson, a future college and NBA star, the Crispus Attucks Tigers went down in history as the first state champions from Indianapolis and the first all-black team in U.S. history to win a racially open championship tournament—an integration they had forced with their on-court prowess. From native Hoosier and award-winning author Phillip Hoose comes this true story of a team up against impossible odds, making a difference when it mattered most.

# Program Ideas

## Watch Parties

Save the date for one of the National Book Festival talks by the featured Indiana authors (or any other author on the list who is popular in your community) and plan a watch party. Pop some popcorn, set up the big screen and plan some discussion questions for after the talk.

## Podcast Club

As a partnership with public media, the National Book Festival puts out an NPR podcast series and PBS special featuring prominent authors from the lineup. Help your community engage with this content by listening to one of the podcasts or watching the special and then having a discussion about it—either in person or over a video call.

## NBF Reading Program

Think BookIt or Summer Reading! Encourage patrons to read books written by authors from the featured list, and give prizes for completing certain challenges. You can organize by genre, geography or topic; customize for adults, youth or children; and even encourage your community to read the Indiana Great Reads from Great Places picks from the past few years.

## Indiana Author Book Club

Kick off a monthly Indiana author book club by reading the books featured in this program guide and using the provided discussion questions. After you've read *The Season of Styx Malone* by Kekla Magoon, *Tyler Johnson Was Here* by Jay Coles and *Hunger* by Roxane Gay, find more selections by Hoosier writers on this list of recent winners of the Indiana Authors Awards. You can check out a wide selection of books by Indiana writers from two free statewide lending libraries for book clubs: [Novel Conversations](#), run by Indiana Humanities, and [Circulating Book Club Kits for Youth](#), run by the Indiana State Library.

## Poetry Slam

Have a poetry reading featuring works by National Book Festival poets. Invite community members to read their favorite poem from the featured writers and give awards for the best performances. At the end, open up the opportunity for participants to share original poetry, too!

## Plan Next Year's Road Trip!

While the 2020 and 2021 National Book Festival had to be virtual, there's no time like the present to plan your visit to the Festival in the future. Gauge community interest and plan a roadtrip caravan to our nation's capital for the National Book Festival in 2022. Who knows which Indiana authors will be featured then?!

## Share Your Ideas with Us

Is your library or organization planning any ways to get involved with the National Book Festival and Indiana authors in your community? From watch parties to book discussions to your own creative program idea, the possibilities are endless! [Fill out this form](#) to let us know your programs, ideas and events, so we can share them.



### Connect with Indiana Authors through the Indiana Authors Awards

The Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Awards honor the best books written by Indiana authors. Awarded every two years, they celebrate Indiana writers, shine a light on the Hoosier state's literary community and deepen connections between Indiana writers and readers. They were established in 2009 as a vision of Eugene and Marilyn Glick and are a new component of Indiana Humanities' rich and diverse literary programming. Learn more at [indianaauthorsawards.org](http://indianaauthorsawards.org).



### Connect with Indiana Authors through the Hoosier Toucan Interviews

Sammy the Interviewing Hoosier Toucan began interviewing writers with Indiana connections in June of 2020 as a way to highlight local authors during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sammy, who can generally be found in the Indiana Young Readers Center, has talked to over 50 literary creators including poets, memoirists, nonfiction writers, children's novelists, writers for teens, illustrators and playwrights. Learn more about Indiana's writers by diving into this off-the-wall YouTube series, complete with a show-and-tell with each participant.

### Useful Links

- [National Book Festival](#)
- [Indiana Young Readers Center](#)
- [Indiana Authors Awards](#)
- [Hoosier Toucan Interviews](#)
- [Great Reads from Great Places](#)
- [Jay Coles](#)
- [Roxane Gay](#)
- [Kekla Magoon](#)