

## Biblio File

Melissa Fraterrigo's *The Perils of Girlhood* was included in Lit Hub's 100 Notable Small Press Books of 2025.

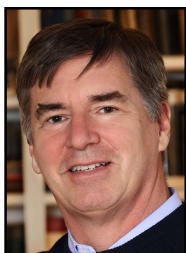
Reviewer Debra Gwartney wrote,



Melissa  
Fraterrigo

"There's such a tone of genuine vulnerability in this book – it makes you want to give young Melissa, as well as adult Melissa, a big warm hug." ... *White Lies: How the South Lost the Civil War, Then Rewrote the History*, by Ann

Bausum, has been named a finalist for the American Library Association's YALSA 2026 Excellence in Nonfiction Award. The winner of this top prize for teen nonfiction was scheduled to be announced on Jan. 26. *White Lies*, published by Roaring Brook Press at Macmillan, has also been named a best new book of the fall by the Washington Post and received best book of the year designations from the New York Public Library, Booklist, Kirkus, School Library Journal, Horn Book Magazine and Shelf Awareness. These five journals had previously praised the book with starred reviews, as did Publishers Weekly and the Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books.



John Kropf

... John Kropf had a piece included in the October issue of the Great Lakes Review, "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald, Perch Sandwiches, Baby Steps, and Other Memories of Growing Up on the Great Lakes." ... Martha Miller's review of *Gertrude Stein: An Afterlife* (Scribner, Oct. 7) has been published in SinisterWisdom.org (<https://www.sinisterwisdom.org/node/1055>). The book is the

## Staying in her lane: Author traces the history of Rte. 66



Susan Croce Kelly signs copies of her book at the launch of *Father of Route 66: The Story of Cy Avery*. (Photo by Peter Whippy)

Susan Croce Kelly, author of two award-winning books tracing the history of U.S. Route 66, is busy helping the country celebrate the centennial of the famous highway.

In 2026, she is one of a dozen speakers in "Research Route 66," a series of virtual monthly lectures on the second Tuesday of each month focusing on different aspects of the old highway and the people who made it memorable. Kelly, who will speak on Feb. 10, will tell listeners about Cy Avery and the invention of Route 66, not only as an important thoroughfare, but also as a destination.

For those unable to attend live, each session will be recorded and made available on YouTube.

(Research Route 66 is a collaborative program developed by the National Park Service's Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program, Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership and 10 leading archives, libraries, and museums located

along the route.)

In addition, she was interviewed for the Route 66 Podcast, and she will be a guest speaker in at an event May 5 at the Springfield-Greene County Library Center as part of the Springfield Celebration of the US 66 centennial.

On July 16, she will talk about Route 66 at the Polk County Public Library in Bolivar, Missouri, and on Aug. 25, she will be at the Callaway County Public Library in Fulton, Missouri.

In March, which is Women's History Month, Susan will make several talks about her book, *Newspaperwoman of the Ozarks, the Life & Times of Lucile Morris Upton*, that won the Missouri Library Association 2024 Literary Award.

On March 5, she will address the Daughters of the American Revolution chapter in Aurora, Missouri, and on March 10, she will be guest speaker at the Ozarks Heritage Research Center in West Plains, Missouri.

## Biblio File

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story of Stein's life and, after her death,



Martha Miller

the struggle of Alice B. Toklas to get Stein's remaining works published. ... **Marlene Targ Brill** is a new instructor for the (Chicago area) North Shore Senior Center with her hybrid PowerPoint program,

"Jane Addams: The Most Dangerous Woman in America" which she will present on Feb. 2. Register for this one-time program at [www.nssc.org](http://www.nssc.org) (\$15 members/\$20 nonmembers). She hopes to provide another program on Judith Resnik and the Challenger disaster this summer. ... In a post on Nov. 14, **Richard Lindberg** wrote, "I began my memoir, *Whiskey Breakfast: My Swedish Family My American Life* (See *Literary License* April-July, 2011) with just a title in 1989. It took 22 years from the idea and concept to publication with the University of Minnesota Press in 2011. Along the way there were years of endless revisions,

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## 3 writing fellowships offered

The Chicago Women's History Center is offering three writing fellowships this spring for writers interested in biography, memoir, narrative fiction, speculative fiction and poetry.

The center invites applications from writers who wish to advance the historical record of Chicago women. The center is particularly interested in applications from writers interested in documenting the legacy of Chicago women who passed away between 1990 and 2020. These fellowships are in celebration of the 25th Anniversary of Women Building Chicago 1790 - 1990.

Work created as part of the fellowships will be published in a fall publication. The word count for final submissions is 11,000. The submission deadline is Feb. 27. For more information, visit: <https://www.chicagowomenshistory.org>.

rewrites and then searching for a publisher that at the time seemed a futile exercise, and the experience made me want to consider giving up. The Minnesota Press recognized the worth of the story, calling it powerful and moving and perfect for their Scandinavian studies books. Once it was finally published, the reviews that came in were splendid, and it won two book awards, including the Chicagoland Writers Association nonfiction book of the year in 2012. The moral is never give up on it." (*Whiskey Breakfast* also was a finalist in the 2012 Midland Authors book awards). ... Regal House will publish **Michael Loyd Gray's** *Emperor of the Mundane* in 2027 (See *Literary License*, Page 4). ... As a direct result of a \$250,000 grant proposal written by **Jim Schwab**, Augustana Lutheran Church of Hyde Park passed its final city inspection on Jan. 7 for a solar panel installation that now powers the entire church building. Jim wrote the \$250,000 grant proposal on behalf of Augustana to the Chicago Climate Infrastructure Fund two years ago. Jim also led the church team that administered the project. The work included reroofing two sections of the building and the solar installation in December. Jim is a retired urban planner with extensive bonafides and publications in areas like disaster resilience and climate change. ... The Illinois Library Association's Illinois Libraries Present was scheduled to host **Jonathan Eig** on a virtual Jan. 13 program. ... In a mid-November post, **Connie Goddard** wrote, "*Learning for Work* had another great review this past

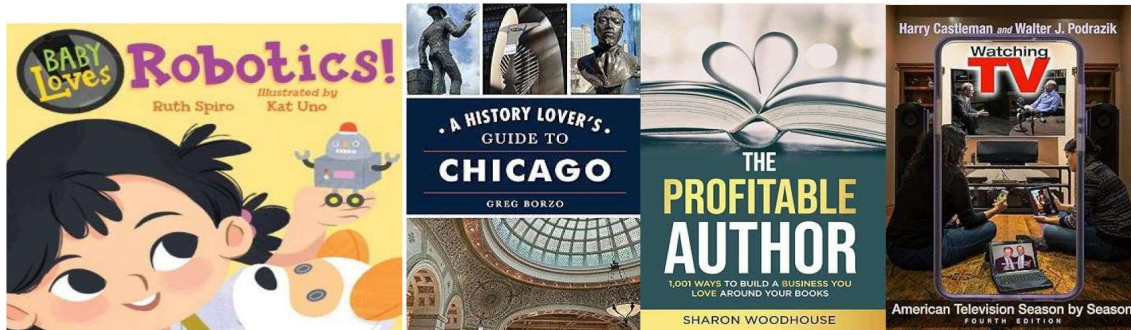


Jonathan Eig

week – this one was in the *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*. It closes with a comment about encouraging more 'conversations around technical ed' and gives a plug to schools that help students 'find their place beyond classroom walls.' ... **Barbara Gregorich** has this warning for other Midland Authors: "For the last six months or so authors have been bombarded with emails purportedly from 'book marketing specialists' who extol a particular title. The emails contain no business address, and if you Google the 'book marketing specialist' you never find their names or places of business. All authors should be aware these emails, which praise a particular title in wonderful detail, are designed to get the author to 'bite' and spend money on opportunities that don't really exist (various non-existent book clubs). The Authors Guild and the Mystery Writers of America have warned members about these scams. I often receive four or five such emails a day, each for a different book. I find some of the emails hilarious: The artificial intelligence writing the letter treats one of my 99-cent collections of blog posts as if it were profound fiction the length of, say, *War and Peace*. And recently, I received a wonderful AI analysis of 'Ballad of the Horse and Mule' – which won't be published until May 12. AI treats it as an already-published book. For the most part, I find these emails infuriating – as I would any tactic that preys on writers." ... *The Waters*, by 2016 Midland Authors Adult Fiction finalist **Bonnie Jo Campbell**, was named a 2025 Michigan Notable Book. ... **David Truer**, winner of the 2020 Richard Frisbie Award for Adult Nonfiction, wrote "Who Gets to Be Indian – and Who Decides" for the February *Atlantic*.

## Midland Authors Presents Another “How-To” Panel “After the First Book Contract”

Congratulations: you signed your book contract. Now what? Participating in the publishing process? Marketing? Branding for more books? These pros offer suggestions to help you build a winning book writing career.



**What:** Midland Authors *free* monthly program

**When:** Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 7p.m.

**Where:** Home - zoom link:

<https://uic.zoom.us/j/82586263133?pwd=3ufMrLJdY8Byp8my6PpDOCbT0e627D.1>



**Ruth Spiro** has authored more than 30 children’s books, with over one million copies sold worldwide. Her bestselling *Baby Loves Science* board books are groundbreaking, introducing big ideas to the littlest listeners. She frequently speaks at schools and conferences, previously appearing in Spotlight Chicago, Windy City Live, LA Times Festival of Books, World Science Festival, and more.



**Greg Borzo** is an award-winning journalist who has worked as a business editor, science writer and news officer. Then he began writing books and is now working on his ninth, *Uncovering the South Loop*. Earlier books include *Lost Restaurants of Chicago*, *Where to Bike Chicago*, *The Chicago “L”* and *Chicago’s Fabulous Fountains*. He conducts tours and presentations about, what else, Chicago!



**Sharon Woodhouse** owns [Conspire Creative](#), a book business agency offering coaching and consulting for authors and indie publishers. Former founder of award-winning Lake Claremont Press, she specializes in helping authors build holistic, income-generating businesses through strategic partnerships, creative marketing, and entrepreneurial thinking. She writes about author business development and publishing on Substack and in her book, [The Profitable Author](#).



**Walter Podrazik, Moderator** is an educator, consultant and curator at the Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago. He is also co-author with Harry Castleman of eight books on popular culture including *Watching TV American Television Season by Season*, now in its fourth edition.

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## Literary Latest



### WRITING ABOUT PLACE

*Late Invocation for Magic: New and Selected Poems* by **Jim Daniels** was published in January by Michigan State University Press.

Daniels tells Literary Latest, “When I started looking over my stack of previously published books, I noticed that certain subjects – obsessions, really – kept coming up. I have always been someone who writes about place a lot – for me, it’s the Detroit area – and that certainly is the central setting in this book.



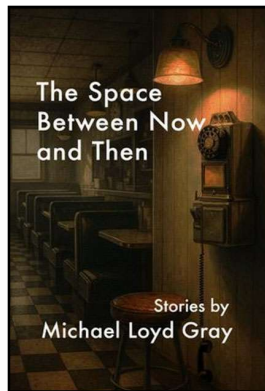
**Jim Daniels**

“Though the poems occasionally take us to other places such as France, Vietnam and Pittsburgh, where I live now, I like to think that I bring Detroit with me into those other places. I wanted to create a portrait of place, family, social class and how those things are intertwined, particularly in urban areas, and selecting poems from across the various collections gave me an opportunity to try to create something that might have more depth and range than the individual collections.

“It was interesting for me to look back on my poetry over the decades and see how it’s changed, even when writing about similar subject matter. I hope it’s

interesting for readers as well.”

From the publisher: “In poems selected from his long career, Daniels focuses on Detroit and other Rust Belt cities, where issues of class and race and justice play out in the streets and kitchens and backyards and garages of the Americans trying to live and make a living there. Known for his courage, clarity, and accessibility, Daniels examines the tension between our idealized country and the messier cultural and economic divides, often focusing on those who can’t afford or have access to ‘magic.’”



### THREE NEW BOOKS

**Michael Loyd Gray** writes to say, “In March, my novel *The Writer in Residence* comes out from Between the Lines Publishing. My story collection, *The Space Between Now and Then*, comes out in May from Silent Clamor.

“*The Space Between Now and Then* came together over the last three years but one of the stories, ‘Little Man,’ goes back many years. It was probably the first ‘good’ story I wrote, and it even won two prizes (money, too!) in 2005.

“I began the story when I was in the MFA program at Western Michigan University.

“The story is sort of a bridge between warming up as a story writer and then becoming one. Several of the stories were finalists for story awards. I want readers

to believe the characters could be real people and to then enjoy peeking into the drama of someone’s life.

“My upcoming book *Emperor of the Mundane* just came to me one day, probably when I was frustrated with a laptop’s shenanigans and multi-tasking, and I could clearly see this guy who wanted a simpler life. He hates the internet’s chokehold on his children even more than he hates his job.



**Michael Loyd Gray**

He can’t stand the obsession with smartphones, social media, and text messaging. His wife keeps him on time and well dressed, but they don’t really connect any more. An excerpt appeared in *Amsterdam Review* as the story ‘The Glowworm Group.’”

From the publisher of *The Space Between Now and Then*: “In the space between what was and what might have been, we discover who we really are.

“A teenage boy watches his father take a brutal beating in a diner parking lot. A woman walks out after 23 years of mind-numbing marriage. A man learns on Facebook that his estranged brother has died and drives to the cemetery, wondering if he is capable of mourning someone he stopped loving long ago. A housewife feels something stir as a little handyman crawls into the darkness beneath her house.

“Michael Loyd Gray maps the fractured geography of the American heartland – its dive bars and loading docks, its rivers and diners, its unspoken codes of masculinity and survival.

“These are stories of men and women caught between the lives they inherited and the ones they’re still trying to build, wrestling with fathers who couldn’t love them right, marriages that calcified into silence and moments of grace found in unlikely places.”