



Our mission shall be to encourage new, talented writers associated with the Midwest and to promote the arts, especially literature, among our members.

## Message from FAW President – *Tammie Bob*

Dear Friends of American Writers,



The April birthday party was a true celebration of our organization at 100 years. It was an opportunity to gather and reminisce, take stock of who we are and what we've accomplished. We learned some little-known facts about our history and took home some great FAW swag: a book outlining FAW's 100 years, beautifully composed by Roberta Gates and Joan Gordon; the keepsake mug designed by Karen Burnett that showcases our new logo; books donated by the Young Adult and Adult Literature Award committees, and jewelry and bookmarks crafted by Angela Gall. The Centennial Committee, headed by Roberta Gates and Karen Pulver put so much effort into this event, and they really outdid all expectations! But it wouldn't have been so festive without the great attendance. Thanks for showing up!

What a joy it was to be at the FAW Centennial Gala May 12. This was a true celebration of our organization, an elegant, fun evening where we enjoyed each other's company and took a good look at our history. Both Pat Adelberg and Vivian Mortensen were honored for their many years of tireless service to FAW. Kathy Katz's flower arrangements were spectacular, as was her help in securing the beautiful space at the Women's Athletic Club. The presentation by keynote speaker Audrey Niffenegger ("The Time Traveler's Wife") was an inspiring testament to the work of artists and writers. None of this would have happened without the very hard work this year of our Centennial Committee: Roberta Gates, Karen Pulver, Kathy Katz, Vivian Mortensen, Angela Gall, Karen Burnett, Joan Gordon. They outdid all expectations.

On a personal note, this letter is my final one as president. It has always been an honor for me to serve on the Board, and a privilege to work with so many smart, creative, and dedicated women. I am delighted to turn over the presidential duties to the very capable Ida Hagman. Please welcome her in her new role. Thank you for everything these past two years.

Remember to mark your calendar for the FAW Literature Awards on June 3, 2022. We will congratulate the 2021-2022 winning authors and hear about their books.

Happy Spring!

*Tammie Bob - FAW President*



## June 3rd Program – FAW Literature Awards

Please join FAW for the 2021-2022 FAW Literature Awards on Friday June 3, 2022, at The Fortnightly of Chicago. All five winning authors will be present at our awards luncheon.

We will meet before lunch at 11:30 am in the Parlor of the Fortnightly of Chicago. A selection of beverages – white wine, iced tea, fruit juice – will be served at no additional charge. The winning books will be available for sale (cash or credit card) and all the authors will be available to sign them. Lunch will be served at noon followed by the presentation of the awards. Afterwards, the authors will again be available to sign books you can purchase at the event.

### Luncheon Reservations

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**Luncheon reservations and cancellations are due no later than 6:00 PM Tues May 31** Call and make your reservation as soon as possible. Luncheon will be served at 12:00 noon in the main floor dining room of the Fortnightly Club of Chicago, 120 E. Bellevue Place. The Fortnightly has COVID-19 safety measures in place. The seating is tables of 6 – 8 socially distanced. Proof of vaccination is no longer required.



Please remember that vegetarian meal requests are special order, and the Fortnightly chef only prepares the number of meals that are requested. Do not ask the staff for a vegetarian meal at the luncheon if you did not pre-order one at the time of your reservation. The menu for the Awards Luncheon is: Fire-roasted strawberry & heirloom tomato salad, fresh mozzarella, basil, and balsamic reduction. Petite filet of beef, crispy fingerling potatoes, rosemary, asparagus and a tarragon shallot aioli. Passion fruit moose dome, coconut cake, blueberry gelee.

**Call:** Pat Adelberg - [\(847\) 588-0911](tel:(847)588-0911) or Peggy Kuzminski - (cell) [\(773\) 710-8637](tel:(773)710-8637) for reservations.

- ✓ **Cost is \$45.00** Pay by check(preferred) payable to FAW at the door. Cash is accepted also.
- ✓ **Vegetarian meals should be requested at the time you make your reservation.**
- ✓ You must call to cancel your reservation, otherwise you will still be charged.
- ✓ Group reservations - please only have one person make the group request to avoid confusion.
- ✓ You may request a permanent (standing) reservation for all the meetings. You must then call and cancel any meetings you are unable to attend.

### **TROUBLE CLIMBING STAIRS?**

The Fortnightly has a handicapped entrance on the east side of the building. It's not just for wheelchair users. Anyone who has arthritic knees, sprained ankles, etc. should use it. There is a sidewalk along the east end of the building leading north to a locked door. Ring the doorbell and staff will let you in and direct you through the basement to the building elevator.

If you wish to use this special entry, call ahead to the Fortnightly (312-944-1330) and staff will give you instructions. They will be ready to answer the doorbell when you come and show you to the Lounge.



It is time to renew your FAW membership for the September 2022 – May 2023 year. You may ask why we don't wait till it is closer to our September meeting. The FAW by-laws specify that membership dues shall be payable in May for the ensuing year, and October is the renewal cut-off date. Each summer, a mailing is sent out to all our members with a membership renewal form and an addressed envelope for return. If you have a new address, please let us know in advance so we don't miss you. We want to welcome back all our fabulous members for another year of programs, and it takes a lot of planning to put this in place.

## YP Literature Award 2022

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**Angeline Boulley**  
*Firekeeper's Daughter*  
Henry Holt and Company: \$1,650.00



**Waka T. Brown**  
*While I Was Away*  
Quill Tree Books: \$1,650.00



**Lisa Fipps**  
*Starfish*  
Penguin Young Readers: Nancy Paulsen Books: \$1,650.00

### Young People's Literature Committee Notes – Angela Gall, Sally Kowalewski

The Young People's Literature Awards Committee picked three wonderful winners this year. We are thrilled that all three authors plan on attending the Awards Luncheon on June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Our first winner is Angeline Boulley. She wrote *Firekeeper's Daughter*.** According to her website, "Angeline Boulley is an enrolled member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. She is a former Director of the Office of Indian Education at the U.S. Department of Education. *Firekeeper's Daughter* is her debut novel and was an instant #1 NYT Bestseller. The book has been named the Walter Dean Myers Award for Outstanding Children's Literature, the Printz Award, the William C. Morris award for YA debut literature, and was an American Indian Youth Literature Award Honor Book."

*Firekeeper's Daughter* is a gripping novel for young adults. It follows the life of Daunis, a newly graduated high schooler, who witnesses the tragic death of her best friend by the hands of her drug-crazed boyfriend. Despite the devastating pain she feels from the loss of her friend, Daunis agrees to participate in an undercover FBI investigation of a drug-ring that has infiltrated her community. Daunis is determined to do whatever it takes to seek justice for her friend.

Daunis has always felt a bit like an outsider. She is half-white, half-Native American. She is not a fully enrolled member of her Ojibwe tribe, but she is fully embraced by her elders who love and support her unconditionally. They even risk their own safety to protect her when her life is in danger due to the FBI investigation. Additionally, the elders in her community keep her connected to her roots by performing the traditional ceremonial rituals that have endured for centuries. These ceremonies allow Daunis to gather the strength and courage to keep moving forward as she battles through the very real devastations that plague her indigenous community—drug/alcohol addiction, rape, and prejudice.

Daunis is a character who will not soon be forgotten. Her name meaning daughter will keep the fire of her people alive and well in the hearts and minds of all who read her story. (Review by Angela Gall)

**Our second winner is Waka T. Brown. She wrote *While I Was Away*.** According to her website, "Waka was the first American born in her family and was raised in Topeka, Kansas. She grew up speaking both Japanese and English. Waka currently is an online instructor with the Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education (SPICE). She teaches U.S.-Japan relations to high school students in Japan. Recently, she was honored to receive the U.S.-Japan Foundation and EngageAsia's national 2019 Elgin Heinz Outstanding Teacher award. She lives in the Portland, Oregon area with her husband and three sons."

In Waka T. Brown's non-fiction middle-grade book, *While I Was Away*, the memoirist admits "personal memory can be a slippery thing", but Brown had journals and letters from the 1980s, and most of her experiences during her months living with her grandmother in Tokyo were quite different from living with her family in Kansas. They could be expected to leave vivid, lasting impressions on a twelve-year-old girl.

Waka's parents and her older brother and sister had immigrated when her father came to the US to study medicine. At the time of the memoir, her sister is about to start college, her older brother is about to be a high school sophomore, and there is a younger brother. The family had visited Japan with the children when Waka was five and again when she was seven. She has never stayed there without her family.

Not meeting her parents' expectations for understanding the Japanese language is the reason Waka was sent to Tokyo for five months. We learn how daunting these expectations are in the first few pages when Waka explains she need to know three Japanese alphabets: hiragana, katakana, and kanji. The first two have 46 characters each, the last 2000, of which she should know 800 by the start of sixth grade- Waka knows about 50!

Besides academics, Waka must learn cultural expectations at school, and perhaps even more daunting, her grandmother's house rules and behavioral expectations. Waka grows through all her challenges and concludes that being away has allowed her to "take on more colors" just as the ajisai (hydrangeas) change color when grown in different soil. We are inspired by Waka's adaptations and realizations, just as we empathize with her struggles along the way. (Review by Sally Kowalewski)

**Our third winner is Lisa Fipps. She wrote *Starfish*.** According to Penguin Random House website, "Lisa Fipps is a graduate of Ball State University, award-winning former journalist, current director of marketing for a public library (where she won the Sara Laughlin marketing award), and an author of middle-grade books. *Starfish* is her debut novel. *Starfish* has won numerous awards including the 2022 Michael L. Printz Award for Excellence in Young Adult Literature Honor Book. Lisa lives in Kokomo, Indiana."

It is said that bullies are "made not born". As a child Ellie, the protagonist of *Starfish*, can't be expected to understand what made her mother a bully. But from the book's beginning we see Ellie's siblings as bullies being made, and their behavior compounds the horrors of Ellie's family life.

In front of Ellie's Under the Sea birthday party guests, Ellie's sister Anais calls five-year-old Ellie "Splash" as Ellie cannonballs into the swimming pool dressed in a whale swimsuit. Ellie's brother Liam shouts that she has "almost emptied the pool." The deep hurt Ellie sustains at home and at school is the basis for *Starfish*, and it is the canvas on which her story is painted.

Ellie's therapist helps her learn not to be defined by her weight, how to confront her family, how to let her emotions work for her, and how to stand up to bullies without revenge. Her therapist says about her role, that she is ". . .someone to talk to, to sort out what's going on in your life and how you feel about it, to figure out what you can do to change or accept it."

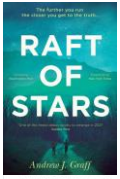
While constantly suffering her mother's bullying, Ellie hopes to convince herself that her mother loves her. She finds pitifully few examples. Not until the book's end does Ellie realize: "I have people in my life who love me, so I'll be okay."

She has two loving girl friends --with loving families--whose normalcy counterbalances her bullying classmates; her father who finds practical help for her as does the school librarian; and an English teacher who possibly recognizes more about Ellie's talents than anyone. She also has Gigi, a dog who unconditionally loves Ellie.

*Starfish* is an emotional journey. If the book leaves readers with no other emotion than hope, its existence will have been justified. (Review by Sally Kowalewski)

## Adult Literature Award 2022

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**Andrew Graff**

*Raft of Stars*

Ecco - HarperCollins

\$2,500



**Lyndsey Ellis**

*Bone Broth*

Hidden Timber Books

\$2,500

### Adult Literature Committee Notes – Ida Hagman

The Literature Awards Committee is happy to announce this year's awards, which are, *Raft of Stars* by Andrew Graff (HarperCollins) and *Bone Broth* by Lyndsey Ellis (Hidden Timber Books). The authors will each receive \$2,500 for their award-winning books. Both books are strongly rooted in the Midwest and both authors plan to attend June 3, 2022 Awards Luncheon.

*Raft of Stars* takes place in a small town in Wisconsin in the 1990's. This is the story of "Fish" and "Bread," 10-year-olds, who believe they are in trouble and run to the woods. They turn an old shack into a raft and take off down the river. The boys are followed by four people hoping to catch them before they reach a dangerous gorge. There are surprises and suspense as well as romance. The book reminded me of Huckleberry Finn and the film, *The Night of the Hunter*.

Graff grew up fishing and hiking in Wisconsin's Northwoods. After a tour of duty in Afghanistan, he earned an MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop. He has taught creative writing and literature at home and abroad.

*Bone Broth* takes place in the St. Louis and surrounding suburbs. This is a multi-generational family saga. Justine, the matriarch, whose husband has died recently, is grief torn. She finds comfort in going to funerals and stealing something. Justine is a complex character who says one thing but does another. She is wily and withholds information from her friends and family. She has three children. From author Ellis' website: "Raynah, the unruly spitfire social activist, is determined to uncover the truth of that past. Lois, the struggling real estate agent, contends with the reality of white flight while also dealing with the older emotional toll of violently losing her son. And Theo, the public servant, battles with the memory of violence, love lost, and his own sexuality. Through these linked perspectives, *Bone Broth* delivers the touchstones of an inequitable society: violence, suppression, and the human capacity to continue in the face of extreme adversity. With clear, cutting, biting prose, Ellis explores how trauma affects family dynamics, how it permeates every aspect of life, and how reckoning and reconciliation require the strength and courage to confront all the broken, jagged memories from the past."

Lyndsey Ellis is a St. Louis-born fiction writer, essayist, editor, teachivist, and communications professional. She's passionate about exploring intergenerational struggles and resiliency in the Midwest. Ellis earned her BA in English from the University of Missouri-Columbia and MFA in Writing from California College of the Arts in San Francisco. She was a recipient of the San Francisco Foundation's 2016 Joseph Henry Jackson Literary Award. In 2018, she received a grant from the Barbara Deming Memorial Fund for her fiction. Her writing appears in several publications and anthologies, including *Kweli Journal*, *Catapult*, *Electric Literature*, *Fiction Writers Review*, *Joyland*, *Entropy*, *The Offing*, *Shondaland*, and *Black in the Middle: An Anthology of the Black Midwest*.

***The Last Flight*** by Julie Clark

Fiction, Thriller

Review by Karen Baker

The Last Flight is a psychological thriller about two women whose chance encounter provides them the opportunity to escape from their demons in the form of a dark and dangerous “Freaky Friday.” Two desperate women deserve clean slates by leaving their old lives that are slowly suffocating them.

Claire appears to have the picture-perfect life, married to a wealthy politician and living in a luxurious Manhattan townhouse. This is far from the truth as she feels trapped by her abusive, controlling, ambitious husband. With the aid of her friend Petra, she formulates a secret plan to create a new identity and flee the toxic relationship on a business trip to Detroit. Last minute changes to her schedule by the controlling husband finds her on her way to Puerto Rico and without access to her new identity and money.

Eva grew up unwanted in a group home. Her life was never an easy journey, and she grew up untrusting of people. Despite this she earns a scholarship to Berkeley University. Head over heels in love with the star football player, she is an easy target and gets cajoled into making illicit pharmaceuticals then expelled from Berkeley. Homeless and desperate for money, she takes on making and selling more drugs for a local gangster. Now she is trapped into a dangerous and illegal life.

At the airport, Eva overhears a panicked phone call by Claire to Petra and crafts a "chance" meeting in the lounge with Claire. Eva tells a tale of woe to Claire hoping to spark sympathy from a woman whose circumstances seem equally dire. Together they make a last-minute decision to switch tickets – Claire taking Eva's flight to Oakland, and Eva traveling to Puerto Rico as Claire.

The writer switches between Claire and Eva's point of view to unwind and flesh out the events that led up to the switch and the conclusion of the story.

<b><u>FAW 2022 - 2023 Officers</u></b>	<b><u>Committee Chairs</u></b>
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Lord, keep your arm around my shoulder and your hand over my mouth.

May you always have:

Love to share,

Cash to spare,

Tires with air,

And friends who care.