

IOWA

International
Writing Program

2021 ANNUAL REPORT





International
Writing Program



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Mission Statement

The mission of the International Writing Program (IWP) is to promote mutual understanding by providing writers from every part of the world the necessary space, physical or imaginative, for creative work and collaboration in an intercultural setting.

Our mission is anchored in the values of freedom of expression and inclusiveness, and in the belief that creativity has the power to shape the world.

We execute this mission by building enduring creative communities, encouraging cross-cultural dialogue, and supporting writers at all stages of their careers.

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ON THE COVER: Emmalee Hallinan performs a dance inspired by the writing of Fall Resident Diana del Ángel (Mexico) as part of the “How, Now, to Care?” performance that premiered on November 9, 2021 in collaboration with the University of Iowa Department of Dance. Top photo by Rachel Wagner. Bottom photo by Karen Stalling.

International Writing Program
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Photo by Rachel Wagner

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Photo courtesy of The University of Iowa, Office of Strategic Communication

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings, friends,

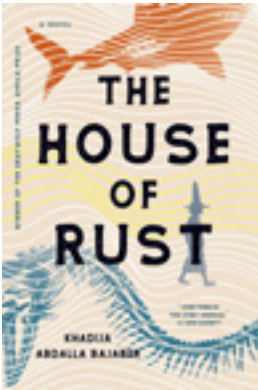
What a long, strange trip it's been, the Grateful Dead sang when I saw them perform long ago at Roosevelt Stadium in Jersey City. And this lyric from "Truckin'," which the Library of Congress recognized as a national treasure, has been much on my mind over the last year as the International Writing Program (IWP) responded to the seemingly endless pandemic in ever more creative ways: dividing in half the cohort of writers for the Fall Residency in order to host for the first time in our history a Spring Residency; refining the nature of virtual exchanges in Between the Lines and the Summer Institute before relaunching in-person programming; establishing digital learning courses designed to inspire resiliency among young writers in Africa, Europe, and South America, while exploring the tradition of speculative writing; resuming our Lines & Spaces tours, bringing Kazakh and Russian writers together in Almaty and working with Georgian writers in Tbilisi; and teaching virtual creative writing workshops to Ukrainian high school and college students, in their besieged country or in exile. Who could have imagined we would find ourselves in such a strange place?

Writers, for one. They are often ahead of the curve, creating, describing, and analyzing in poetry and fiction, drama and essays, vibrant worlds that may soon resemble our own, however far removed they may seem to be from our own. "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world," Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote in *A Defence of Poetry*. The Romantic poet, who died two hundred years ago this summer, understood how writers can see into the future, if their descriptions of the present, invented or real, are accurate enough. And so at the IWP we pay close attention to what the writers we host, teach, and mentor have to say about the long, strange trip we are all on, because—who knows?—we may just catch a glimpse of what the future will bring.

The following pages offer an overview of the many ways in which the IWP connects the writers of the world to one another, to new audiences and literary traditions, and to different linguistic futures, all in the service of making the world a little smaller—and a little stranger. Enjoy.

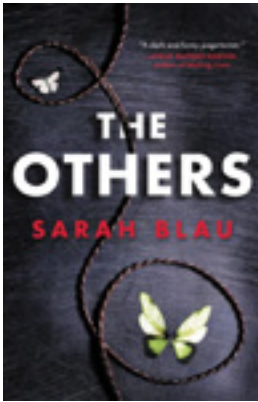
Christopher Merrill
IWP Director

2021 ALUMNI BOOKSHELF



KHADIJA ABDALLA BAJABER, *THE HOUSE OF RUST*
(KENYA, FALL RESIDENCY '22)
Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf Press, 2021

“Here now, already, was *The House of Rust*. A silky book, whose prose dances in an Anglicised Swahili, and whose characters battle in proverbs, it is the culmination of a dream [Khadija] Bajaber had long held: to write a fairy tale about the city where she’d been born and grown up. ‘How cool would it be to read a fairy tale taking place in my home town?’ she’d wondered. ‘Everywhere else gets romanticised, what about Mombasa?’”—Carey Baraka, [Johannesburg Review of Books](#)



SARA BLAU, *THE OTHERS*
(ISRAEL, FALL RESIDENCY '21)
Translated from the Hebrew by Daniella Zamir
New York, NY: Mullholland Books / Little, Brown and Company, 2021

“*The Others* grapples with one of the most relevant questions of modern-day life – what makes women decide not to have children, and should they be punished or treated differently for making this choice? Sarah Blau confronts the modern childfree ethos with the ancient Jewish myth associated with Biblical figures who chose a life without children, narrating the story through the needle-sharp eyes of Sheila, an original, funny, complex and constantly surprising protagonist, to whom there is more than meets the eye.”—[Curtis Brown Group](#)



MAGDA CÂRNEȘTI, *FEM*
(ROMANIA, NEW SYMPOSIUM '06)
Translated from the Romanian by Sean Cotter / Dallas, TX: Deep Vellum, 2021

“Feminism aside, Cârnești is, in the end, an original writer and a masterful stylist, whose mastery of language comes vividly across through Sean Cotter’s dexterous translation. ... Her novel transgresses feminist ideology, proposing a vision that implies a change in human perception, a vision attempting to unify the outside and the inside, the object and the subject of all human experience...”
—Alta Ifland, [Los Angeles Review of Books](#)



ALEJANDRA COSTAMAGNA, *THE TOUCH SYSTEM*
(CHILE, FALL RESIDENCY '03)
Translated from the Spanish by Lisa Dillman / Oakland, CA: Transit Books, 2021

“...an ambitious portrait of alienation and belonging, and of two families and countries [Chile and Argentina, ed] separated by a range of mountains. Threaded together with encyclopedia entries, pages from an old immigrant manual, typing class exercises, passages from children’s books, half-faded photos, and letters mailed between continents, *The Touch System* introduces Alejandra Costamagna as one of the most powerful and subtle writers in contemporary Latin American literature.”—[Transit Books](#)

A SELECTION OF 2021 TITLES IN ENGLISH AND ENGLISH TRANSLATION



MORTADA GZAR, *I'M IN SEATTLE, WHERE ARE YOU?*
(IRAQ, FALL RESIDENCY '16)
Translated from the Arabic by William Hutchins
Seattle, WA: Amazon Crossing, 2021

“Mortada Gzar moved from Iraq to Seattle ... in search of lost love. His new memoir traces this journey circuitously ... Addressed to unlikely audiences from new roommates to Heraclitus the three-legged dog and Richard Beyers’s clothing-covered statue ... in Fremont, Gzar tells his story to his new city as a means of understanding it himself. From idylls like the brief days he spent falling in love with Morise in Basra to the horrific abuses he suffered as a young gay man growing up in Iraq, the story surprises at every turn, wrenching the heart and delighting the imagination in equal measure.”—Gabriella Page-Fort, [Seattle City of Literature](#)



SRIDALA SWAMI, *RUN FOR THE SHADOWS*
(INDIA, FALL RESIDENCY '13)
Chennai, India: Context, 2021

“Almost all the poems in *Run for the Shadows* are strung together by a gossamer theme of time—its passage, anticipation, experience, ravages and, most of all, relentless one-directional arrow. ... If you read it from cover to cover, you can sense the arc that holds the volume together. The poems do not necessarily grow in dramatic intensity, but their cryptic, confessional and, at times raw, energy leaves you with bursts of self-awareness.” —Somak Ghoshal, [LiveMint](#)



MARIE SILKEBERG, *DAMASCUS, ATLANTIS*
(SWEDEN, FALL RESIDENCY '15)
Translated from the Swedish by Kelsi Vanada / Newark, NJ: Terra Nova/MIT, 2021

“The poet’s searing observation that ‘Oil is the answer to almost every question’ looms over the geopolitical shape of this collection’s poetics. As she moves from colonial amnesia to a fierce indictment of colonial rule, Silkeberg shows us what it means to inhabit today’s globalized world.”—Rebecca Ruth Gould, [Poetry Foundation](#)



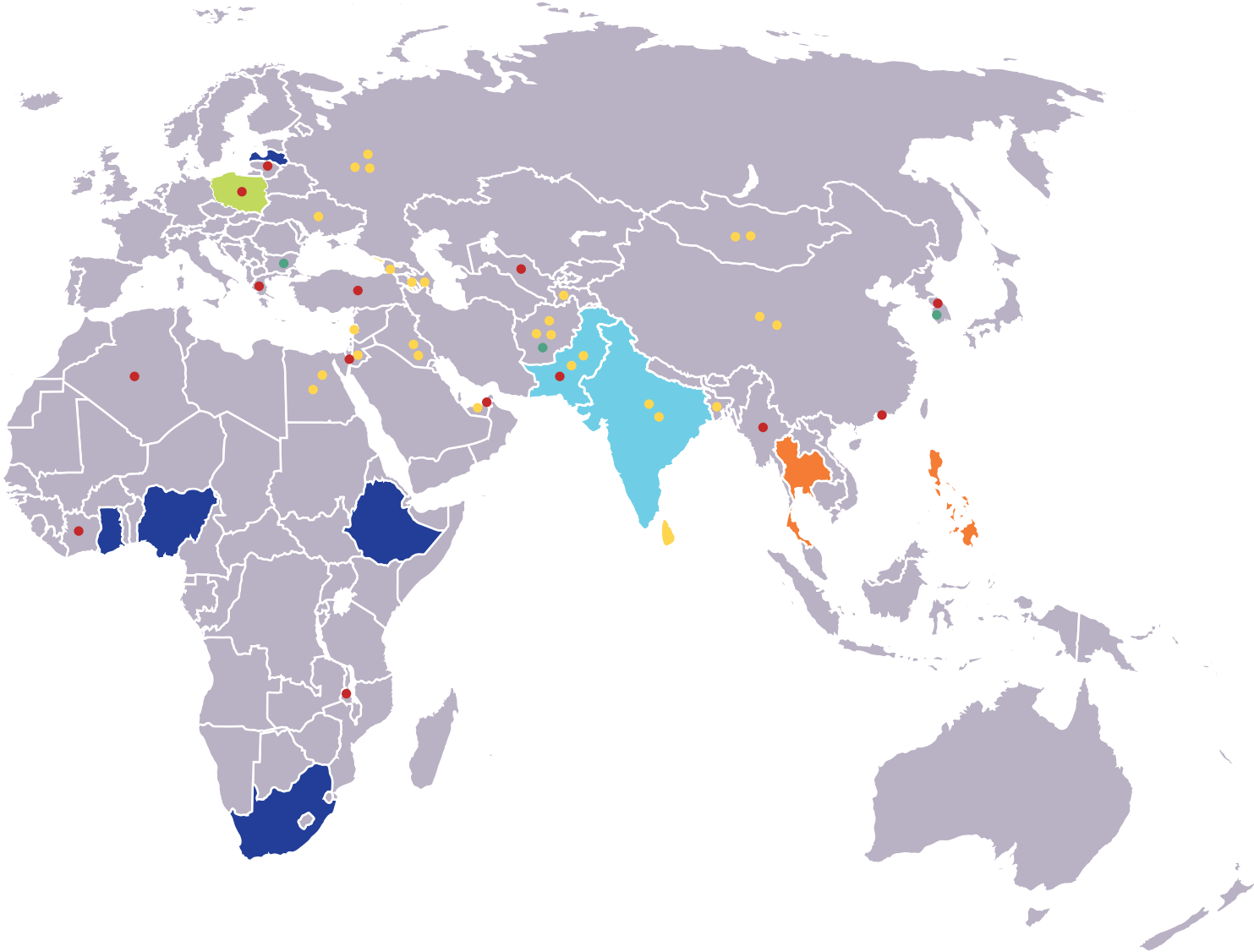
LO YI-CHIN, *FARAWAY*
(TAIWAN, FALL RESIDENCY '07)
Translated from the Chinese by Jeremy Tiang
New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2021

“Taiwanese writer navigates hospital bureaucracy when his father falls ill while vacationing in China. ... As the story opens, the narrator learns that his father has suffered a cerebral hemorrhage while visiting his original hometown in China and has been hospitalized in critical condition. One of the many Chinese who fled Mao’s Communist forces in 1949, he abandoned his first wife and son and started a new family in Taiwan. ... Lo is a clever, resourceful writer. He finds humor in his namesake’s struggles with mainland customs and red tape while tapping into a rich vein of memories and emotions stirred when history or crisis makes the challenges of family life even gnarlier.”—[Kirkus Review](#)

2021 IWP PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Map Key

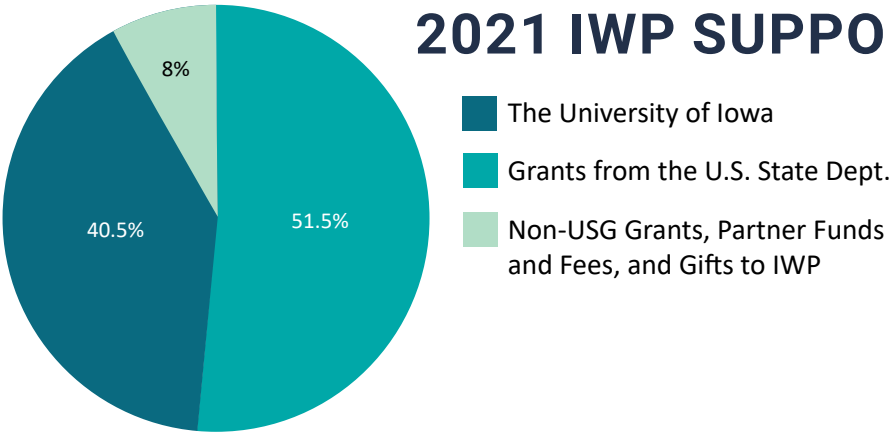
- Between the Lines
- Creative Writing and Literary Entrepreneurship
- Exploring the Possible
- Fall Residents
- 91st Meridian
- Summer Institute
- Telling Our Stories
- Who Are We? The Overlap in Our Experience



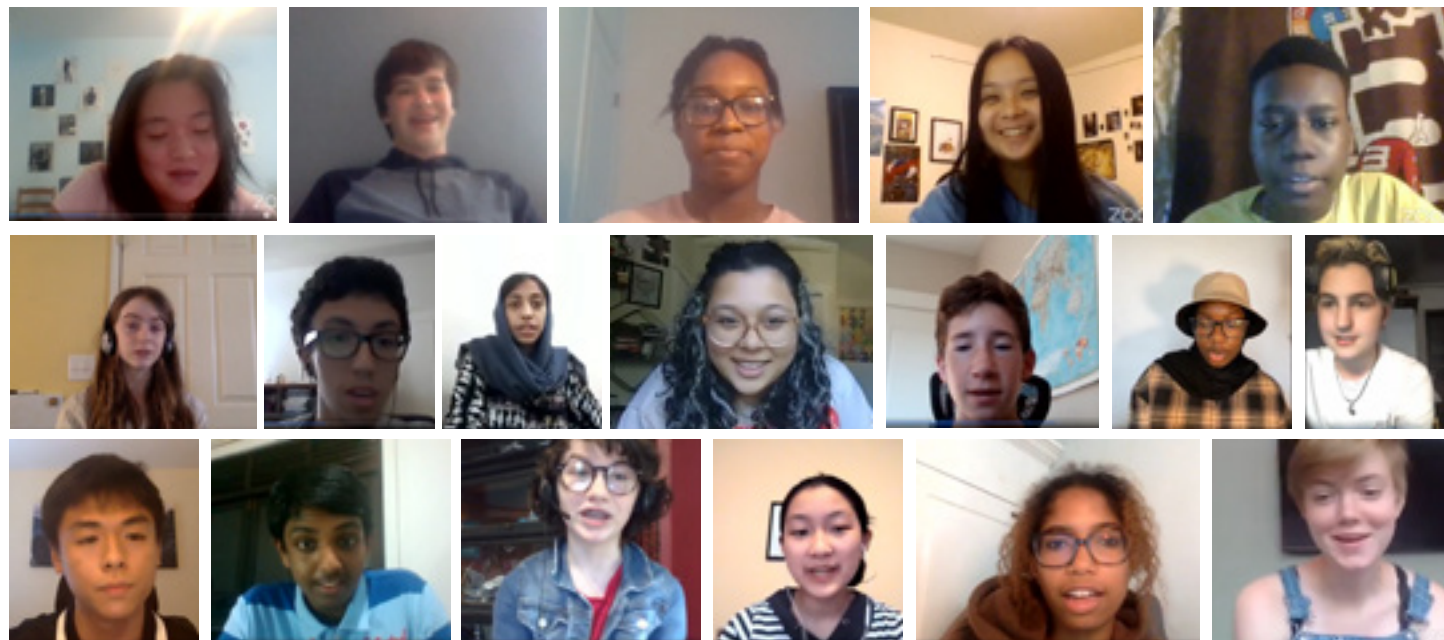
@UIIWP ON SOCIAL MEDIA



2021 IWP SUPPORT



BETWEEN THE LINES



Portraits captured during the BTL: Peace and the Writing Experience open mic live stream (viewable at bit.ly/btl-pwe-21) and BTL: Identity & Belonging open mic live stream (viewable at bit.ly/btl-ib-21).

In 2021, for the first time in the fourteen years that Between the Lines (BTL) has existed, we opened the application process with the announcement that the program was going virtual. And for the second consecutive summer, we successfully maintained our global and U.S. reach during the COVID-19 pandemic, offering a pair of two-week sessions to young writers ages 15–18.

With the support of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) of the U.S. Department of State, **BTL: Peace and the Writing Experience** built on IWP's core mission of global cultural outreach—expanding from several Arabic-speaking countries at its inception to include more than 50 young writers from a record 21 countries in 2021. From July 10 through July 24, expert faculty Rumena Bužarovska (IWP Fall Resident '18, North Macedonia), Mary Hickman (BTL Faculty '15, '16, '17, '20, U.S.), Shandana Minhas (IWP Fall Resident '13,

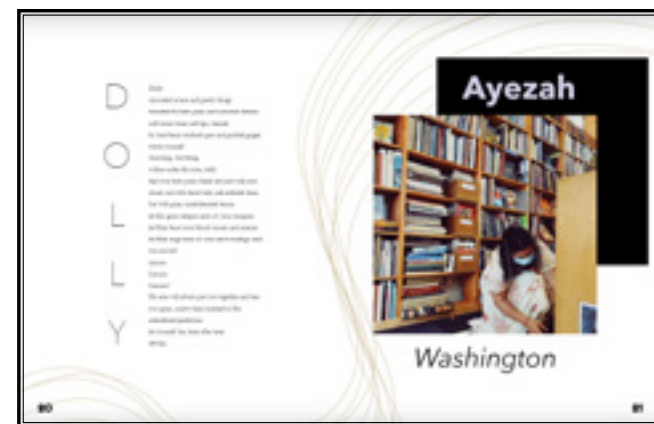
Pakistan), and Vladimir Poleganov (IWP Fall Resident '16, Bulgaria) skillfully guided participants through creative, cross-cultural, and otherworldly writing prompts, reading poetry and short stories, engaging in debates, and instigating lively discussions. In literature seminars, the students and instructors conversed with favorite authors and poets across time and space; examined American cultures through the stories of Amy Tan and Jhumpa Lahiri; read and discussed texts by Pakistani authors of three different generations; pondered Cortázar's "Axolotl;" unraveled the mysteries of Octavia Butler's metaphors; and explored ideas about utopia, dystopia, and anti-utopia with Ursula K. Le Guin. From orientation day and the July 17 open mic event to the final graduation day, the participants chatted with their virtual "roommates" and lulled each other to dreamland with bedtime stories. They found windows into each other's daily lives from afar via the [BTL Instagram account](#) and Zoomed in to the faculty reading

hosted by Iowa City's iconic bookstore, Prairie Lights.

With the support of the Building Bridges program, which was funded by the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art (DDFIA), IWP's summer session **BTL: Identity and Belonging** has been expanding IWP's reach beyond geopolitics into diverse cultural realms within the United States itself since 2018. Through practicing creative writing with young people from a variety of cultural backgrounds, BTL joins the Building Bridges program in their mission "to support national efforts, working with U.S. Muslims, to increase mutual understanding and well-being among diverse populations for the benefit of building stronger, inclusive communities."

In **BTL: Identity and Belonging**, through their artful teaching and pedagogic strategies, instructors Poupeh Missaghi and José Olivarez showed our students ways to write in individual voices even while reflecting (on) their personal and collective histories. Challenged to think critically about social, political, and cultural structures, the students broadened their perspectives by studying the creative work of authors, artists, and poets such as Marwa Helal, Noor Hindi, Liana Aghajanian, Khashayar Mohammadi, Sara Rahbar, Ghinwa Jawhari, Tish Benson, Gertrude Stein, Danez Smith, Morgan Parker, and Ocean Vuong. Participants had the opportunity to perform their new works in a June 25 open mic event (linked on the previous page) and enjoyed the livestreamed faculty reading hosted by Prairie Lights on July 28.

In addition to the daily writing workshops and literature classes, BTL students were invited to special seminars with visiting authors: they explored where their identities live inside a poem with poet Marwa Helal and discovered erasure poems with Kiki Petrosino through her book *White Blood: A Lyric of Virginia*. They created digital stories



ABOVE: Pages from the BTL: Identity and Belonging anthology. Read it at bit.ly/btl-ib-anth21

"I will leave these two weeks with an injection of creativity that I never had before. I will leave with Miss Mary's laugh, Mr. Vladimir's mystery, Miss Rumena's vitality, and Miss Shandana's deep knowledge in cultural writing."—2021 BTL participant



ABOVE: Follow BTL on Instagram @[btl_uuiwp](#)

"From BTL, the most important thing I am gaining is the connections. I never realized how many opportunities are waiting around, ready to be explored. I have gained confidence, and I have gained chances. I will make sure to use them to their full potential!"—2021 BTL participant



ABOVE: Pages from the BTL: Peace and the Writing Experience anthology. Read it at bit.ly/btl-pwe-anth21

inspired by the multimedia work of Lauren Haldeman and examined visual and poetic documentary forms with Joumana Altallal and Razi Jafri. They improved their zine creations’ graphic presentation with the help of multidisciplinary artist alea adigweme and merged ideas to create fantastical story concepts with Henry Lien. With nonfiction writer Sarah Adler, they paid attention to joy and healing in their writing practices. They also envisioned ways to build creative communities “Beyond BTL” with Caroline Meek and program alumni. In a special seminar coordinated with the Urban Word organization, 2021 National Youth Poet Laureate (NYPL) Alexandra Huynh, 2020 NYPL Meera Dasgupta, and 2021 competition finalists Faye Harrison and Serena Yang also Zoomed in to share their work and experiences in the spotlight.

Through COVID-19, war zones, severe weather, responsibility for siblings and family, working jobs, attending school, starting college, cracked devices, spotty internet,

turning day into night and night to day, and other challenges to physical and mental health, our participants persevered so that they could write ferociously, inhabit new imaginative worlds, and most importantly, be together:

“Listening to everyone, seeing how much work they’d put in it, how much passion they have, the encouragement in the chat.”

“YALL DID AMAZINGGGGGG and are so talented.”

“I love creating art with you all.”

That they had now grown together to the point of regretting that they were not physically together—well, ultimately this was precisely the proof that the community we had collectively built transcended our virtual walls.

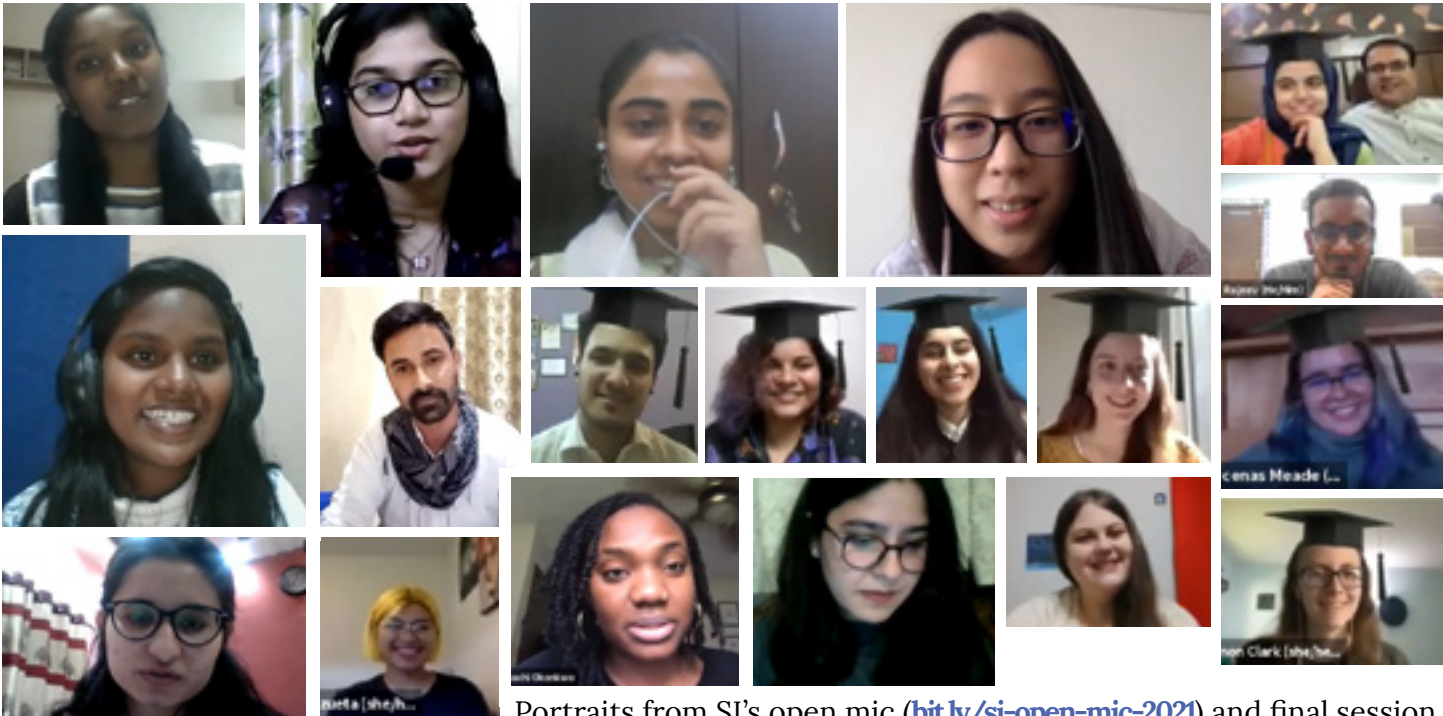
— IWP Youth Programs Coordinator Alisa Weinstein

“For so long, I have felt alone, I have felt that my writing has no impact on the world, and I was really contemplating letting it go, but this experience made me realize that my ability to write has greater value than I have known, it has given me the sense that I am part of a larger community of people, and despite our differences of language, culture, race and nationality, we face the same struggles.”—2021 BTL participant

2021 Between the Lines Participants:

Mona ABD EL-GAWAD, Egypt	Emily JONES, U.S.	Niloufar RASOULI
Mohammad AL ADDASI, Jordan	Charlotte JUDKINS, U.S.	Emily RIGHTER, U.S.
Ghala ALNAQBI, UAE	Andrew KANG, U.S.	Maia ROOTHAAN, U.S.
Bailey ANDERSON-KITA, U.S.	Mariia KARACHEVA, Russia	Anna SAFRONOVA, Russia
Tara AWATE, India	Khalida KHAIRI	Joe SAWMA, Lebanon
Andrew BARBER, U.S.	Courtney KIM, U.S.	Kritheeshwar SENTITCUMARAN, Sri Lanka
Sansar BATBAYAR, Mongolia	Victoria KISHOIYIAN, U.S.	Ulyana SIROTKINA, Russia
Nina BALLERSTEDT, U.S.	Elizaveta KUKAVA, Georgia	Caeleigh STAMPER, U.S.
Varvara BORDYUG, Ukraine	Victory LADIPO, U.S.	Neptune STEVENS, U.S.
Grace CHAN, U.S.	Natalia LASHLEY, U.S.	Haritha SUGATHADASA, Sri Lanka
Leyun CHENG, China	Aneesah LAWRENCE, U.S.	Anxing SHEN, China
Aleksandr CHOBANYAN, Armenia	Tenuun LKHAGVADORJ, Mongolia	Janina SHIVDASANI, India
Anuva CHOWDHURY, Bangladesh/U.S.	Zainab LODI, Pakistan	Shue Ying Lauren TAN, U.S.
Kathryn DAEMICKE, U.S.	Spencer MADSEN, U.S.	Sara TANNOUS, Lebanon
Anna DAI-LIU, U.S.	Maude MALONE, U.S.	Abigail TENENBAUM, U.S.
Ayezah DAR, U.S.	Ariya MASHIYAT, Bangladesh	Daiana USSENKHAN, Kazakhstan
Adele DONOVAN, U.S.	Aliyeva MEHRIBAN, Azerbaijan	Isabella VALENZUELA, U.S.
Christopher EID, Lebanon	Bi Bi Aisha MURADI	Luke WILLIS, U.S.
Alle FAEQ, Iraq	Rudaina MUSTANSIR, Bangladesh	Alma YAAFOURI, Lebanon
Anna FOX, U.S.	Reina NAJJAR, Lebanon	Charlotte YEUNG, U.S.
Basant GERGES, Egypt	Azizakhon NAZAROVA, Tajikistan	Aruzhan ZHANABATYROVA, Kazakhstan
Brianna GONZALEZ ULLOA, U.S.	Roza NICHIRVAN, Iraq	Vivian ZHU, U.S.
Mariam GULEDANI, Georgia	Kaden NZARO, U.S.	Luka ZUKHUBAIA, Georgia
Arshiya HUSAIN, Pakistan	Amalou OASSOU, Morocco	
Yashaswi JAISHY, U.S.	Ife OLATONA, U.S.	
Claire JIANG, U.S.	Joanna PETERS, U.S.	
	Ayman RAAKIN HAQUE, Bangladesh/U.S.	

SUMMER INSTITUTE



Portraits from SI's open mic (bit.ly/si-open-mic-2021) and final session.

In 2020, the IWP intended to bring young writers from Pakistan, India, and the U.S. together in Iowa for the Summer Institute (SI), a two-week cultural exchange and creative writing program serving college-age individuals (18–22 years old). Because of challenges presented by the global pandemic, SI 2020 became a ten-month virtual program, offered in a largely asynchronous format that allowed participants to choose how and when they engaged with its offerings. If all went according to plan, the IWP hoped to bring the 2020 cohort to Iowa for a traditional two-week experience in 2021.

Unfortunately, global conditions had not improved enough by the summer of 2021 to allow an in-person session. With the continuing financial support of the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan, IWP staff again reimagined SI to serve students in a fully virtual space, this time modeling the

program on the successful design of 2020's virtual two-week Between the Lines (BTL) session. The IWP recruited a diverse new cohort of 30 young writers from India, Pakistan, and the U.S., and set to planning a rich array of writing workshops, literature seminars, and special seminars.

SI 2021 provided opportunities for students to improve as writers and learn about craft while engaging meaningfully with peers from other countries and cultures, sharing their personal stories as well as original work. Using a Facebook group page, WhatsApp threads, and Zoom video chats, the students exchanged ideas, collaborated, and built lasting social, artistic, and professional connections. They also collectively produced and edited an anthology titled *Crosswalks* (URL on the following page). On June 12, the students gave a virtual open mic reading, during which 28 people shared their work.

Each SI 2020 writing mentor returned to their role for the SI 2021 program: once again, Anam Zakaria (Pakistan), Chandrahas Choudhury (India), and Dini Parayitam (U.S.) provided support and instruction to students. Esther Okonkwo (Nigeria) served as program assistant.

During and after SI 2021, the IWP facilitated communication and community building across all SI cohorts. A Facebook group for 2019 and 2020 alumni was expanded to include SI 2021 participants, creating a durable focal point for conversation and distribution of official program news. The IWP also invited alumni to participate throughout the program—past SI participants featured as panelists in the program's concluding special seminar, and all alumni (and family and friends!) were invited to attend the graduation event. A series of monthly all-alumni events after the program's conclusion has helped to maintain the warm, welcoming, and inclusive environment that SI 2021 established. Perhaps most exciting of all, thanks to further support from the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, most students in the SI 2020 and 2021 cohorts are expected to finally attend in-person sessions of the program in the summer of 2022. The IWP's staff cannot wait to meet them.

— IWP Summer Institute Coordinator Peter Gerlach

“I had a small revelation during the institute about writing, believing for the first time that the joy I feel talking about writing is enough of a reason to pursue it. I am so much closer to calling myself ‘a writer’ now than when I began.”—2021 Summer Institute participant



Read the Summer Institute's *Crosswalks* anthology at: bit.ly/si-crosswalks

Watch the 2021 SI Open Mic event:
bit.ly/si-open-mic-2021

2021 Summer Institute Participants:

Laila BARCENAS-MEADE, U.S.	Sana HUMAYUN, Pakistan	Khadija RAHMAN, India
Amama BASHIR, Pakistan	Kassandra KIZLIN, U.S.	Eleen RAJA, Pakistan
Gulaly BEHZAL, Pakistan	Rajeev Anand KUSHWAH, India	Sharmila SENTHIL, India
Ami BHANSALI, India	Junaid Rashid LONE, India	Grace SHIEH, U.S.
Robin BISSETT, U.S.	Maha MAHMOOD, Pakistan	Zoha Jan TAGI, Pakistan
Anushka CHATTERJEE, India	Maumil MEHRAJ, India	Ume Aiman TARIQ, Pakistan
Shannon CLARK, U.S.	Alia MNAYER, U.S.	Zarnab TUFAIL, Pakistan
Amy EVANS, U.S.	Deepika MUNIRAJA, India	Srishti (Sam) UPPAL, India
Javeria HASNAIN, Pakistan	Ayesha MUSHARAF, Pakistan	Madhuri VASUDEV, India
Shahryar HASNANI, U.S.	Isra RAHMAN, U.S.	Susana ZAZUETA, U.S.

DIGITAL LEARNING

“This project was important to me because, as a writer in a healthcare profession, it is unheard of, especially in my home country, that creative writing and medicine/healthcare can occur in the same sentence. Here, we were all challenged to think differently, on how doctors and other healthcare workers can share their message aside from using health education and clinical methods? Storytelling is as old as man. We need to get back to our roots to improve methods used to better healthcare outcomes in our communities.”—*Chinaza Eziaghighala, a medical student from Imo state, Nigeria, whose work with non-governmental organizations involves using stories as a medium to educate the populace on preventive healthcare and wellness practices.*



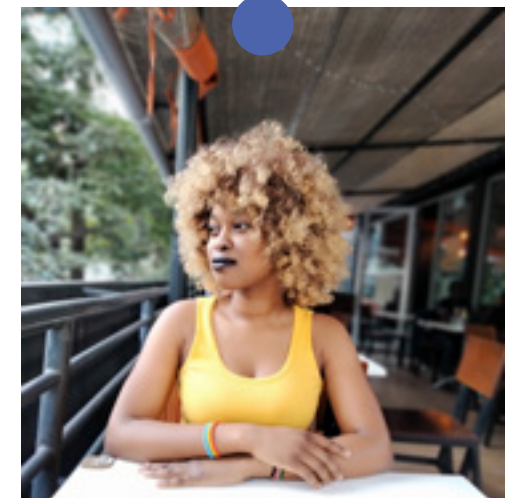
Telling Our Stories: Creative Writing and Healthcare

The act of creating community is often described in arboreal terms: you plant the seeds, you try to help them take root, a plant becomes a stable trunk with branches, and then it seeds further. I wonder if instead the momentum is more rhizomatic—what you can see and report on with relative ease is only the surface. There are unseen connections and contacts going every which way, new connections springing up seemingly out of nowhere—all but impossible connections that you might only hear about after the fact.

This has been the case with our six-month virtual project, **“Telling Our Stories”: Creative Writing and Healthcare**, which brought together physicians and writers from across sub-Saharan Africa to introduce—and interrogate—the discipline of narrative and medicine as practiced at six U.S. institutions. The project looked at this discipline across the spectrum (disciplinary boundaries are diffuse)—from the perspective of global health issues, from the perspective of medical residency training (parallel charting, for instance), and from the perspective of how literature and medicine are worked with in departments of English.

What makes this project unique? On the surface, it is the only program, IWP or otherwise, to bring together alums of two prestigious U.S. Department of State programs: the Washington Mandela Fellows program and the International Writing Program’s Fall Residency. Below the surface: the outstretched virtual connections that formed over the screen have gone off in many directions—inter-African youth healthcare initiatives,

“In the time that I have been part of this project, several life-altering events have taken place in my family. The project helped me to lean into the discomfort caused by these events instead of running away, whether physically or emotionally. Writing consistently knowing that I would receive kind and constructive feedback kept me going even when external circumstances were not favorable. The support offered in this course reflects my ideal creative environment, where life’s challenges are acknowledged and shared and where one is given a platform, an incubator of sorts, to make sense out of what is happening within a safe and validating environment. We do not live or write in a bubble, and this course reflected that we can all benefit from communion with others.”—*Nkateko Priscilla Masinga, medical doctor from South Africa. Writer, publisher, spoken word artist, theatre actress, TEDx speaker, and World Economic Forum Global Shaper.*



“The current media environment is overflowing with stories about global health but many of those stories lack sufficient context and the stories emerging from the global south are frequently overshadowed. This project is important in offering a mechanism for writers from developing countries to practice storytelling skills and, in the case of public health stories, explore ways to connect individual stories with the scientific and epidemiological literature.”—*Lise Saffran, former director of the Master of Public Health Program at the University of Missouri and recent co-chair of the Health Humanities Consortium (HHC). Currently an Associate Teaching Professor in the MU Department Public Health, where she teaches Storytelling in Public Health and Policy.*

“This project has helped me to channel my work as a writer to increase awareness on the possibilities of domestic violence victims finding and receiving help. I use stories of domestic violence survivors to encourage and support victims. During this project I started a movement on social media called DocumentOurHis_story where I post these stories. This started as a result of prompts given here to use storytelling as a component of ‘public health humanities’ and narrative communication in public health.”—*Ololade Ajayi, feminist and poet from Nigeria. An advocate for women’s rights and volunteer for various NGOs that provide support for victims of rape.*

texts that were written in response to assignment prompts being published in literary journals, faculty at the medical schools reaching out because of interest, shadow-schemes arranged by the participants within each other's facilities and organizations (sometimes cross-disciplinary, medical-to-literature organization and vice versa).

The Telling Our Stories project grew a small community beyond its intended attempts to bring together African physicians and creative writers: as a result of having a First Nations physician and poet lead one of the six-month-long sessions, connections were formed among some of the participants who were indigenous/tribal Africans—these added to the existing connections of medicine and creative arts backgrounds. There are already small spinoff projects underway among these participants.

The project has also spurred some project participants to serve as guest instructors for courses led by the session leaders of this project at several U.S. universities. (These were not medical courses, but medicine and humanities courses provided by both medical faculties and liberal arts faculties.)

We also hope to present at one of the major narrative and medicine conferences in October alongside our African colleagues, and there are other collaborations in the works as well. My use of that word here—*colleague*—is the most telling sign of how we are sustaining this community in the long term. We do not think of them as participants in a one-time project, but rather as our colleagues.

— IWP Digital Learning Coordinator Pamela Marston



Anne E. Green

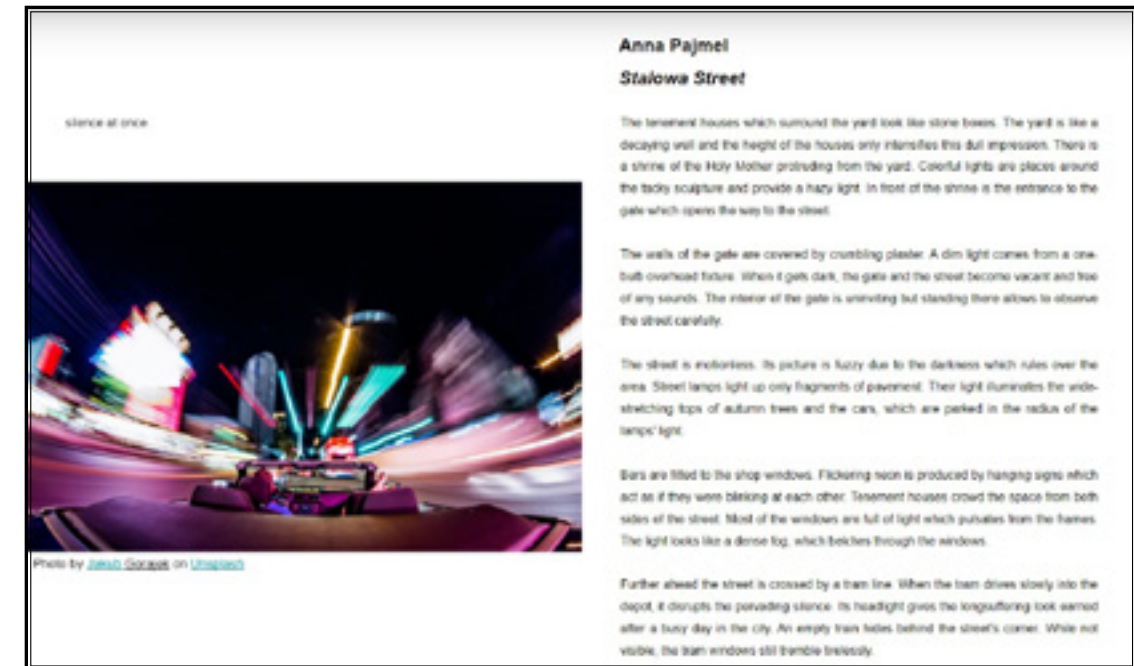


Jude Idada

“I’d like to think that all efforts to write about or within medical systems have the potential to change them. I’d like to think that projects like ours give people a sense of community and a sense of worth. I’d like to think that writers who gain a little confidence in their writing and their sense that they have something important to talk about, will help to make their experiences and concerns more visible, which is the first step toward change. ... This project will always be needed because we are always in a pandemic. If not a virus, it’s cancer, heart disease, diabetes, aids, medical debt, racism. I never see a time that the need for programs like these will ever go away.”—Ted Fristrom, professor of the Writing in the Medical Humanities programs at both Drexel University and Drexel College of Medicine in Philadelphia. He is interested in what stories—by doctors or patients—reveal about illness, and what role writing plays in healing from trauma.

Exploring the Possible

October 10–November 10, 2021



ABOVE: Pages from the Exploring the Possible anthology. Read it at bit.ly/explr-21

This four-week course, which had 23 Polish participants, focused on speculative fiction. The course ended with a visit by Dominika Słowik, an IWP 2021 Fall Resident from Poland, who read from her unpublished collection and held a short question and answer session with participants.

Creative Writing and Entrepreneurship

October 15–December 15, 2021

This eight-week course applied techniques of entrepreneurship to the creative literary arts and literary publishing fields. Eighteen writers and university students ages 18–35 from the Philippines and Thailand participated in the course. Many participants already had a very high level of community engagement, so the course focused on adding new aspects to their existing efforts (e.g., how to diversify youth leadership camps) and ways to promote and publicize the creative writing activities on which they were already working (e.g., starting a podcast).

“The course was absolutely amazing! Sharing my work with other people and listening to their writing was inspiring and gave me a lot of thoughts. Discussing writing is something I do not get to do a lot in my daily life and I believe it will make me a better writer.”—Digital Learning Participant

FALL RESIDENCY



Fall Residents and IWP staff pose together outside the Shambaugh House.

Since 1967, the International Writing Program's Fall Residency, a "United Nations of Writers," has provided a one-of-a-kind forum connecting literary artists from around the world. The experience has been life-changing for its participants and transformative for the network of writers and readers that continues to develop around IWP and our partners, facilitating cultural exchange and collaborations. When the IWP was forced to postpone its 2020 Fall Residency due to the global pandemic, we hoped to bring a full complement of authors in spring 2021; and when there had to be a further postponement, to fall 2021, we turned our efforts to online programming that our delayed guests could take advantage of, such as virtual participation in the Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) conference, the Global Poetry Consortium's annual poetry festival, a virtual collaboration with the UI Department of Dance, and opportunities to work together via Zoom.

Unfortunately, the pandemic's continuing challenges led IWP and our colleagues at the U.S. Department of State to determine that the planned 2021 cohort should be divided in two, with sixteen writers joining us in the fall and sixteen more planning to join us in the spring of 2022. We were of course disappointed not to be able to bring everyone to Iowa



Fall Residents and staff show their smiles.

right away, but once the fall's authors arrived, the atmosphere was overwhelmingly one of gratitude: though it was of course necessary for us to be mindful of potential health and safety issues, it was a true pleasure and privilege to once again be in community with our guests in shared physical spaces.

Some activities, like our weekly Shambaugh House reading series, went hybrid, adding a streaming audience, and all the public programming was marked by safety precautions. We also explored new opportunities for special experiences, such as several Fall Residents having their work excerpted for digital performances as part of the annual international "From Away" theatre

festival based at Portland Stage; outdoor pop-up readings; and a new iteration of the "Postcards from Iowa" project where samples of the Residents' writing were projected on the facades of buildings in downtown Iowa City.

Though we of course wish the circumstances had been different, the 2021 Fall Residency helped to establish strong bonds between the smaller group of writers and the university community, and we are proud to have provided a venue for those relationships to form.

— IWP Fall Residency Coordinator Shelly Criswell

2021 FALL RESIDENCY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 24
Premiere of “Eyes Closed Eyes Open” UI Dance Department collaboration

April 19-23
Global Poetry Festival

September
Virtual orientation sessions for Fall Residents

October 1
Arrival in Iowa City

October 2
Walking tour of Iowa City

October 3
Cinematheque (Fall Resident-curated film series—weekly hereafter)

October 4
Orientation and welcome lunch
International Literature Today Class (weekly hereafter)

October 7
Library tour

October 8
International Translation Workshop (weekly hereafter)
Shambaugh House Reading series, held every Friday (also live streamed)

October 15
First IWP panel lecture at Iowa City Public Library (weekly hereafter)

October 20
Center for the Book tour
Iowa City Book Festival event featuring Habib Tengour and Pierre Joris

October 22
Panel discussion with Habib Tengour and Salha Obaid offered in partnership with the UI Department of French and Italian and UI Arabic and Swahili Programs

October 26–30
New York City trip

November 2
Helon Habila, Ida Cordelia Beam Distinguished Visiting Professor reading

November 6
Witching Hour festival pop-up reading

November 9
Premier of “How, Now, to Care?” UI Dance Department collaboration

November 11
Global Express performances of Fall Resident writings by UI Department of Theatre Arts

November 16
Reading by Fall Residency ’05 alum Ma Thida

November 18
Fall Residency covered in Iowa City Press Citizen

November 19
What We Saw: Images of America – Reflections by Residents at Iowa City Public Library

November 22
Thanksgiving at International Programs
Pop-up readings on Iowa City pedestrian mall

November 23
Exit orientation

November 28
Farewell brunch

November 30 – December 3
“From Away” digital performances of plays by three Fall Residents made available
“Postcards to Iowa City” project

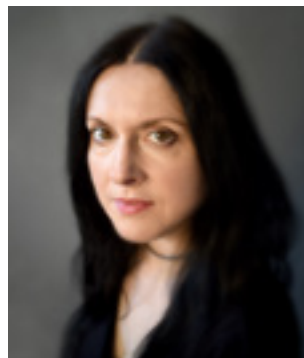


Top to bottom: Fall Resident Muthi Nhlema with his words projected in downtown Iowa City; bowling night; the International Translation Workshop meets at the Shambaugh House; Thanksgiving dinner; and Fall Resident Diana del Ángel with her words projected in downtown Iowa City.



IMAM BAKSH

(storyteller, children's book writer, teacher; Guyana) is the author of two award-winning young adult novels: *The Dark of the Sea* and *Children of the Spider*. His children's stories, too, have been frequently recognized; he has been a featured presenter at literary festivals on both sides of the Atlantic. An advocate for Guyanese Creole, he runs a literacy project and library for his community and owns and operates a kindergarten. His participation was made possible by the U.S. Embassy in Georgetown and the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



SARAH BLAU שרה בלאו

(fiction writer, playwright; Israel) has had her short stories published in many anthologies in Israel and abroad. Among her novels are [The Book of Creation] (2007), [Those Well-Raised Girls] (2012), [Stake] (2014), and *The Others* (2018; English translation 2021); among her plays are [The Last One] (2004), [Thy Shall Write] (2014), and [Rhinoplasty] (2015). She is the recipient of the 2017 Bar-Ilan University Alumni Achievement Award, and of the 2015 Prime Minister's Prize for Hebrew Literature. She participated courtesy of Fulbright Israel.



CANDACE CHONG MUI NGAM 莊梅岩

(playwright, screenwriter, translator; Hong Kong) has, apart from writing drama, also collaborated in musical theatre and opera as writer and librettist. Selected by the *South China Morning Post* as one of Hong Kong's twenty-five most inspirational and influential women, she is a six-time winner of the Hong Kong Drama Awards, the recipient of a Best Artist Award (Drama) from the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, and the recipient of a number of international honors. Her plays have been performed on European and American stages, translated, and published. She participated courtesy of the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation.



DIANA DEL ÁNGEL

(fiction writer, journalist, poet, scholar, activist; Mexico) is the author of *Vasija* [Vessel] (2013), *Procesos de la noche* [Processes of the night] (2017), and *Barranca* [Ravine] (2018), as well as of critical writing in print and digital media. She has also translated poetry from the Nahuatl. A regular participant in contemporary poetry workshops in Mexico, she has been the recipient of fellowships and residencies in Mexico, the U.S., and Canada. Her participation was made possible by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



EDWIGE DRO

(translator, activist, writer; Côte d'Ivoire) is a co-founder of the collective Abidjan Lit and the founder of 1949, “a library of women's writings from Africa and the black world.” She has facilitated, judged, and translated for many writing competitions, and coordinated the Francophone program of Writivism in Uganda. Her stories and essays, published in magazines like *Popula*, *This is Africa* and the *Johannesburg Review of Books*, have been widely anthologized. She participates courtesy of the U.S. Embassy in Abidjan.



ALEXANDRA K* (KATSAROU) Αλεξάνδρα κ*

(fiction, drama, screenwriting; Greece) has collaborated with the National Theatre of Greece, the Greek National Opera and other major cultural institutions. Her 2018 play *Επαναστατικές Μέθοδοι για τον Καθαρισμό της Πισίνας σας* [Revolutionary Ways to Clean Your Swimming Pool] has been translated widely, and received a Eurodram 2019 Prize; her most recent play [Milk, Blood], based on *Medea*, premiered at the ancient theater of Epidaurus. She is a regular contributor to Greek magazines and newspapers. Her participation was made possible by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



KIM HENA 김혜나

(fiction writer; South Korea) studied Korean language and literature at the University of Cheong-ju. Her first novel, [Jerry], was the 2010 winner of Today's Author Prize; the second, [Junk], was long listed for the 2013 Dong-In Prize of Literature; [The Goldstar Telephone] received the 2016 Soorim Prize of Literature. She has also published a book of essays on yoga, [What Makes Me Breathe]. She participated courtesy of Arts Council Korea.



GABRIELĖ LABANAUSKAITĖ

(poetry, drama, fiction; Lithuania) teaches drama theory and creative writing at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theater. A “text producer,” she works across media, often in collective forms, also organizing poetry and stage events. She has published three poetry collections in CD/DVD format as well as a theory of drama narratives, *Dramatika*, and a number of her plays have been staged in Lithuania and abroad. Her participation was made possible by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



MAE YWAY မယ်ဇွေ

(poet, scriptwriter, publisher; Myanmar) has been publishing her writing in periodicals and collections since 2010. The first volume of her poetry, [Courier], appeared in 2013; [You & I] appeared in 2016. In 2017, she founded the poetry publishing house 90/91, even while working as a digital content strategist and TV writer. Her participation was made possible by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



SANAM MAHER

(nonfiction writer, journalist; Pakistan) covers stories on Pakistan’s art and culture, business, politics, religious minorities, and women. Her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Al Jazeera*, *The Caravan*, *Roads & Kingdoms*, and *The Times Literary Supplement*, amongst others. Her first book, *A Woman Like Her: The Short Life of Qandeel Baloch*, an investigation into the murder of Pakistan’s first social media celebrity, appeared in 2018. She participated courtesy the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



MUTHI NHLEMA

(fiction; Malawi) writes speculative fiction. His novella *Ta O’reva* was shortlisted for Best Novella at the inaugural 2017 Nommo Awards for African Speculative Fiction; other work has also won his country’s leading literary prize, the FMB-MAWU Short Story Prize, and been long-listed for the Writivism Short Story Prize. The story “One Wit’ This Place” opened the 2016 *Imagine Africa* 500 anthology. His participation was made possible by the U.S. Embassy in Lilongwe.



SALHA OBAID صالحه عبيد

(fiction; UAE) published her first story collection, [Alzheimer], in 2010; it was followed by [Postman of Happiness] (2012) and [iPad of Life in the Manner of Zorba] (2014). Her collection [An Implicitly White Lock of Hair] (2015) won the 2016 Al Owais Award for Creative Writing. Her first novel [Maybe It’s a Joke] appeared in 2018. A member of the Dubai Culture and Arts Authority Council and of the Association of Emirati Women Writers, in 2017 she was awarded the Young Emiratis Prize. Her participation was made possible by a grant from the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.



FAHRI ÖZ

(translator, scholar, poet; Turkey) has translated into Turkish many British and American 19th and 20th century poets, and is currently bringing into Turkish Walt Whitman’s and Emily Dickinson’s collected works. He is the coeditor of a collection of “sudden fiction,” *Hayat Kısa Proust Uzun* [Life is Short, Proust is Long] (2000), and the author of the poetry volume *Meşrutiyet Çok Bulutlu On Beş Santigrat Yağmur Olasılığı Sıfır* [Meşrutiyet Street: Heavily Overcast, 15 Degrees Celsius with Zero Chance of Rain] (2019). Until 2017, when he was dismissed for signing the Academics for Peace declaration, he taught at Ankara University. His participation was sponsored by the Institute for International Education, the University of Iowa, and private gifts.



KHOSIYAT RUSTAMOVA

(poet, journalist, editor; Uzbekistan) has since the mid-1990s published ten poetry volumes; her poetry has been translated into some thirty languages. She herself translates poetry from the Russian, the Turkish, and the Azerbaijani into Uzbek. A recipient of national awards in Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan, in 2018 she won the International Poetry Festival in Thailand for her poetry. She is the editor-in-chief of the [World of the Books] magazine. Her participation was made possible by the U.S. Embassy in Tashkent.



DOMINIKA SŁOWIK

(fiction writer; Poland) is the author of two novels: *Atlas Doppelgänger* (2015), finalist for the 2016 Gdynia Literary Prize, and *Zimowła* (2019), which won the national award Paszport Polityki 2020 alongside other honors; *Samosiejki*, a collection of stories, appeared in 2021. She also writes reviews and a regular literary column. Słowik’s current work is dedicated to the Anthropocene and climate change. She participated courtesy of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State.

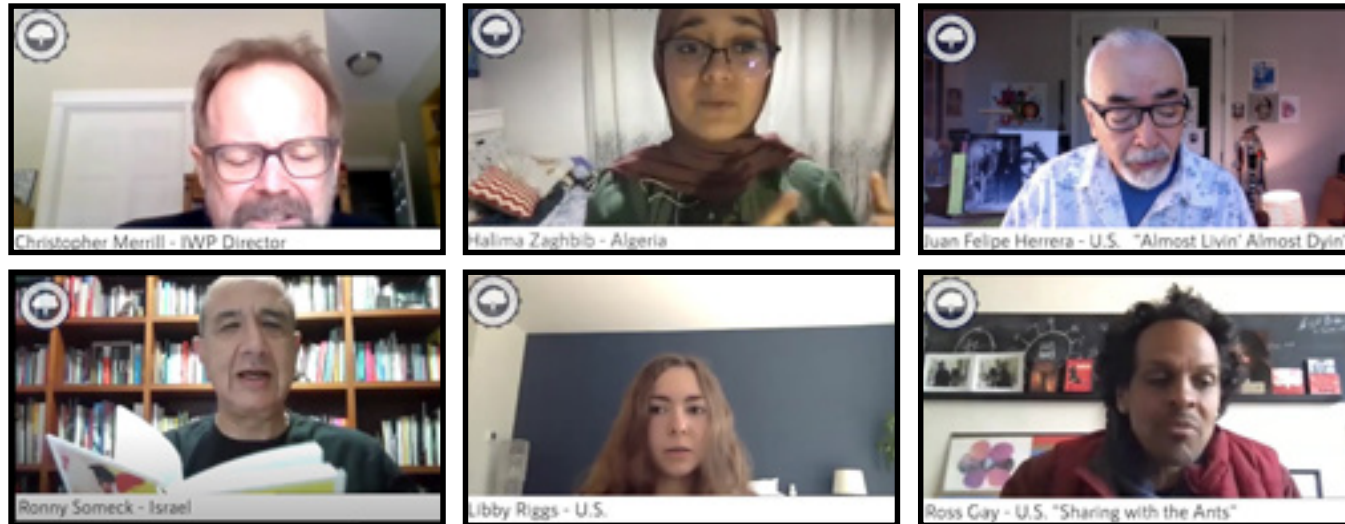


HABIB TENGOUR

(poet, essayist, playwright, translator, scholar, editor; Algeria) has published over twenty volumes of writing, most recently the poetry volume *La Sandale d’Empédocle* (2021). His poetry has been translated into English, German, Italian, Arabic, and many other languages; in turn, he translates poetry from the Arabic and the English. In 2016, that work garnered him a *Prix européen de poésie Dante*. He also directs the series “Poèmes du monde” for the Algerian publisher APIC. His participation was made possible by the Paul and Hualing Nieh Engle Fund.

2021 PROJECTS

GLOBAL POETRY FESTIVAL



Screenshots from the GPF recap video (bit.ly/gpf21-recap).

In the spring of 2021, IWP partnered with the college preparatory school Birch Wathen Lenox's Global Poetry Consortium, Bennington College, Shared Studios, and other schools and writers from around the world to plan and run the 2021 Global Poetry Festival, which took place April 19–23.

The festival, which took place virtually that year as a matter of necessity, featured many past participants and instructors in IWP's various programs, including Fall Residents like Ronny Someck ('92, Israel), Haifa Abu Al-Nadi ('18, Jordan), and Batsirai Chigama ('19, Zimbabwe); Lines & Spaces participant Ross Gay; Between the Lines instructors Poupeh Mlisaghi and alea adigweme; and Between the Lines alumni Libby Riggs ('20, U.S.), Zahara Anver ('20, Sri Lanka), Lina Baaziz ('18, Algeria), and Elizabeth Shvarts ('20, U.S.); among others.

The Global Poetry Festival provided a series of readings, webinars, and workshops for students from grades K–12, with one highlight being an open-mic reading by Between the Lines alumni, who after their performance also shared information about the literary startups that they have been running. A recap video can be found at bit.ly/gpf21-recap, and a full list of the programming, as well as YouTube archives of many of the sessions, can be found at bit.ly/gpf-21.

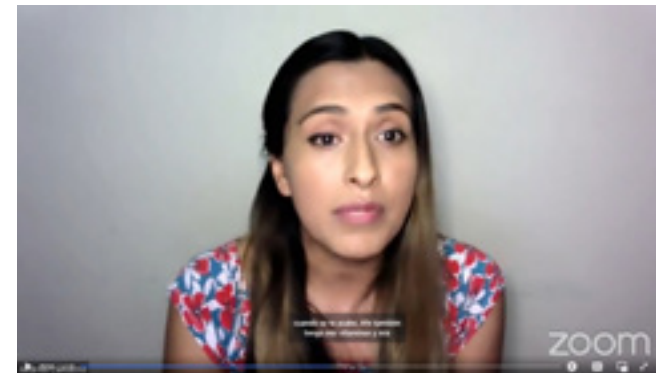
SPANISH LANGUAGE WORKSHOPS



July 5 open mic: bit.ly/waw21-1



July 10 open mic: bit.ly/waw21-2



July 23 open mic: bit.ly/waw21-3



July 29 open mic: bit.ly/waw21-4

In the summer of 2021, IWP provided a series of Spanish Language writing workshops for a combined total of 65 participants in Argentina, Bolivia, Guatemala, and Mexico. The workshops, entitled “Who Are We? The Overlap in Our Experience,” were each conducted virtually over the course of eight weeks.

Instructors focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion in their pedagogy and selection of source texts, with the intention of demonstrating the skillful depiction of intersectional identities in writing, as well as encouraging students to examine their own identities. There was also a particular emphasis on indigenous identities and their intersections with other identities inside and beyond the classroom.

Each workshop culminated in an open-mic reading where the students had the opportunity to share their work. The readings were broadcast via Facebook Live, where they have since been archived; URLs for each performance are provided above.

PERISCOPE

Periscope is a series of personal interviews with authors hosted on the IWP website and conducted by Nataša Đurovičová. In 2021, the series trained its sights mainly on IWP alums directly affected by cultural, political, and international conflicts.



Yuriy Serebriansky (IWP Fall Residency '17) is a Kazakhstani author and cultural researcher of Polish origin.

“In spite of the language status discussion in Kazakhstani society, the optimal way for an author to get recognition here is through Russian translation of their work, or simply by writing in Russian. A Russophone point of view does exist, and should somehow receive attention separate from Russia’s “internal” literature, as well as from other Russophone literatures existing in Kazakhstan—e.g. the Ukrainian. And not only in post-Soviet countries, but also in Israel, for example. Above all, though, the position of the Russian language in Kazakhstan needs rethinking, and while we don’t have a consensus in this matter, it will have impact on literature as well. At the moment, the Russian language environment in Kazakhstan is dwindling.”

Read the full interview at bit.ly/peri-ys21.

INTERVIEWS

The following are excerpts from four such interviews. To keep up with the Periscope interview series, subscribe to the IWP newsletter (bit.ly/iwp-email) or check out the IWP news page (bit.ly/iwp-news).



The Colombian author **Pilar Quintana** (IWP Fall Residency '11) has published five novels and a short story collection; in the course of 2021, she received several national and international awards.

“I think I have always written about the same topic—the masks we wear and desire. I am fascinated by the human being as an animal, rational but still just an animal governed by instinct. My first writing was about that, and so are my most recent works. But there is a before and an after being a mother. Before I was a mother, I wrote a lot about sex, because during sex we are stripped of our mask and are pure desire, instinct, the closest to our animal being. Or so I believed, until becoming a mother. Having a baby, wanting it desperately, carrying it in the womb, birthing it, breastfeeding it, loving it with an irrational and limitless love, all of that, made me feel an animal, no more than that, an animal—like a lioness with her cub. And so, motherhood became my big theme.

Creating a story and finding all its pieces, the actions, the universe, the characters, the language, the tone, is a long process for me. Sometimes it takes more than a decade to finally find what I want to write and how it should be told. I know a character is ready to be written when I know her or him more I than I know myself. When I can hear their voice, when they feel real, like a friend that is not present but exists in my life, when I know their life circumstances in detail, when I understand them and feel compassion for them, no matter what awful things they are about to do.”

Read the full interview at bit.ly/peri-pq21.

PERISCOPE

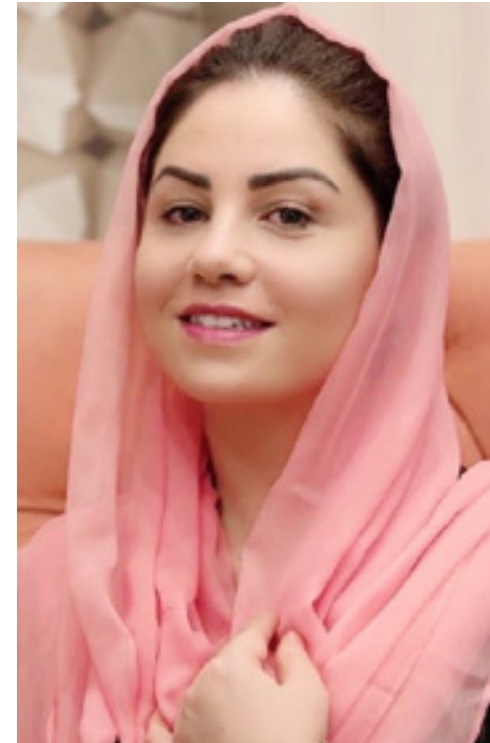


Novelist and journalist **Thawda Aye Lei** (IWP Fall Residency '19) is currently working as a researcher on gender- and media-related studies for Burma-based international NGOs.

“As people all over the world know, on February 1 of this year (2021) the military seized the power in our country, and people’s resistance against the coup is constantly growing stronger. This coup is the third Myanmar’s people have experienced since 1962. Yet this time the situation looks more revolutionary because now people are fighting not only against the military but also against racism and other traditional values, all of which also oppress them. I have come realize that, to reach equilibrium, it is not only the market that is regulated by an invisible hand, but that such invisible hand can also regulate the social world by eliminating extremes. Our lives here in Myanmar are in chaos; we have only ourselves to rely on. There is no common leadership, because we have many diverse ethnic groups and political units. But we, the people, do have a common enemy and we suffer together. We are united yet are at the same time also trying to harmonize the different perspectives of the various groups. People are negotiating with each other to avoid extremes even while we all are combating the junta. For example, people are persuading each other to respect human dignity of an opposing group even if they are faced with inhumane acts committed by those same groups. So, I am taking notes on these historical events. I learned history from novels like War and Peace, Freedom at Midnight, Gone with the Wind, and many others. Now I have become one of the characters in our movement. I could never buy these experiences anywhere, and that also goes for those that were bitter.”

Read the full interview at bit.ly/peri-tal21

INTERVIEWS



Homeira Qaderi (IWP Fall Residency '15) is an Afghani novelist, scholar, and activist. Our interview was conducted in July and August of 2021, just before the withdrawal of the NATO alliance armies from Afghanistan.

“Peace. We have no choice. If there is no peace, no activity makes sense. Art is in recession. The sound of art is silenced by the sound of bullets. War has left people of this land hopeless and helpless. We must find a path to peace. We have to talk to our neighboring countries to take their wars out of our country. The wars of others are like monsters that have eaten two generations of Afghans. We are so caught up in this warring that we are deprived of everything else.

Some people in Afghanistan call war refugees cowards because they didn’t stay to endure the hardship like the rest. I disagree. Everyone has the right to decide for themselves and seek a better life. Yet I ask myself, what will happen to those who stay behind? How can I leave my father at his age? My sister? My mother? Still, there is another matter yet: I am also responsible for my child. He is entitled to live in a peaceful and safe environment. My child is too young to die on the battlefield.

I am not just thinking of myself: emotionally I feel related and connected to this whole country. Many like me are stuck between these two choices in life. I respect those who flee and praise the courage of those who remain. I, however, would like to stay. Now the Taliban are present on all battlefields. I hate war. I can’t kill anyone. But I can kill an ideology—a dangerous one especially. Like the one that is filling the minds of men who are less inclined to a meaningful discourse and are much more eager to kill. Maybe I should attack the sickening thoughts in those minds. My being in this land is worthless if it isn’t in the defense of the men and women of this homeland.”

Read the full interview at bit.ly/peri-hq21

PROGRAM SUPPORT



Photo by Rachel Wagner

The IWP can only continue its activities thanks to the ongoing support of the University of Iowa, as well as federal, state, community, and individual funding sources. We would like to acknowledge our profound debt to the individuals, entities, and institutions listed below.

In light of their departure from the Graduate College, we would like to single out for special thanks both Dean of the Graduate College John Keller and Executive Director of Operations Donna Welter, who have been tireless in their support of the International Writing Program.

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Phillip Assis, Usman Khan, Sharif Sabir, Jian German, and Alfred Osei

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U.S. Senator Joni Ernst and staff

U.S. Senator Charles E. Grassley and staff

U.S. Congress Member Mariannette Miller-Meeks and staff

Iowa City City Council: Mayor Bruce Teague, City Manager Geoff Fruin, and Councilors

University of Iowa Departments, Programs, & Organizations:

Center for Asian and Pacific Studies (CAPS): Director Cynthia Chou; Associate Director Dongwang Liu

Center for the Book: Director Matthew P. Brown; Professor Timothy Barrett; Program Administrator Kathleen Tandy

South Asian Studies Program (SASP): Director Meena Khandelwal

Division of Performing Arts: Director Alan MacVey; Professor Emeritus Eric Forsythe, Professors Bryon Winn and Lisa Schlesinger, and staff; Department of Dance: DEO Rebekah Kowal; Professors Eloy Barragán, Jennifer Kayle, and George de la Peña

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School of Journalism and Mass Communication: Professor Gigi Durham

Iowa Young Writers' Studio: Director Stephen Lovely

Magid Center for Undergraduate Writing: Director Daniel Khalastchi

Obermann Center for Advanced Studies: Director Teresa Mangum

University Dining: Director of University Dining Jill Irvin and staff

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Agudas Achim Synagogue: Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz

Urban Word: National Youth Poet Laureate Director Dr. Camea Davis

The Global Poetry Consortium: The Birch Wathen Lenox Assistant Head of School and Poet and Writer in Residence Ryan Clinesmith; Kyabell Glass

CONGRATULATIONS TO SHEHAN KARUNATILAKA



IWP is pleased to congratulate Sri Lankan author and 2022 Spring Residency writer **Shehan Karunatilaka** on winning the distinguished 2022 Booker Prize for his novel *The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida*. The Booker committee describes *Seven Moons* as “Sri Lankan history as whodunnit, thriller, and existential fable teeming with the bolshiest of spirits.”

In an **On the Map** interview with IWP recorded in May of 2022, Karunatilaka said, “Sri Lanka is a beautiful—it’s a naturally beautiful place, and it’s got a two-thousand-year history filled with conflict, and filled with quirky, absurd characters. And so for a novelist, short story writer, there’s plenty of things to work with. But on the other hand I also have to live there and my children have to grow up there and my parents have to grow old there. And so I often quote Mohammed Hanif, who was talking about Pakistan producing lots of great novels because of their conflicts, and he said, ‘Yes, but I’d rather have a peaceful country and bad books,’ and I also sort of feel that way.” You can watch the full interview at bit.ly/otm-sk22.

In his Booker acceptance speech, Karunatilaka said, “My hope for *Seven Moons* is this: that in the not too distant future, ten years or as long as it takes, that it is read in a Sri Lanka that has understood that these ideas of corruption and race-baiting and cronyism have not worked and will never work,” and that if it’s still in print in ten years, “it’s read in a Sri Lanka that learns from its stories,” and that it is therefore sold “in the fantasy section of the bookshop.”

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