

# Iowa City BOOK FESTIVAL

All Iowa City Book Festival-produced events free and open to the public.  
Full Schedule at [iowacitybookfestival.org](http://iowacitybookfestival.org)

Oct. 5-12, 2025

## ONGOING

**Night Circus, Old Capitol Museum, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Wednesday-Friday through Oct. 17.** A traveling juried exhibition from the Guild of Book Workers. This theme invites curiosity with its Spectacle, fascinates with Artistry and Performance, explores the Mysterious and Luminous, investigates Clandestine actions and Secret knowledge, and embraces Chaos and Otherness.

## SUN, OCT. 5



**Chris Pio, Iowa City Public Library, 2 p.m.** Pio, from Cedar Rapids discusses his Nicknames and Mascots series which describes the origins, evolution and relevant meaning of collegiate athletic team nicknames and the colorful, physical mascot characters that represent the schools.

## MON, OCT. 6

**Guided tour of Paper Engineering in Art, Science and Education, UI Main Library Gallery, 4 p.m.** Join co-curators Giselle Simón, Elizabeth Yale, and Damien Ihrig for a special guided tour of the current University of Iowa Libraries Main Library Gallery exhibition, “Paper Engineering in Art, Science, and Education.”



**Steve Kemp, Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room A, 7 p.m.** Author and former park ranger Steve Kemp discusses his latest book, *An Exaltation of Parks*, which tells the story of John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s collaboration with National Park Service leaders Stephen Mather, Horace Albright, and Arno Cammerer. Their partnership helped shape and preserve some of America's most iconic national parks.

## TUES, OCT. 7

**Donika Kelly, Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room A, Iowa City Public Library, 7 p.m.** Award-winning poet Donika Kelly reads from her new collection, *The Natural Order of Things*, which explores survival, joy, and intimacy through inventive, lyrical encounters with



myth, nature, and connection. She will be in conversation with author Tisa Bryant.

## WED, OCT. 8



**The Making of a Book: A Conversation with Johanna Drucker, UI Libraries, Main Library, Room 2032 (second floor), 1 p.m.** Join the University of Iowa Libraries for an intimate conversation with author, artist, and scholar Johanna Drucker about her new book, *Affluvia: The toxic off-gassing of affluent culture*. In this talk, Drucker will discuss her book, along with its development and publication. It's your chance to learn the ins and outs of writing and publishing your book.

**Artists' Books: Critical Writing in the Field, with Johanna Drucker, Shambaugh Auditorium, UI Main Library, 6 p.m.** In this meeting of the Iowa Bibliophiles, Johanna Drucker will discuss *JAB: The Journal of Artists' Books*, the focus of a new University of Iowa Press volume, *The JAB Anthology*. Drucker will reflect on the journal's contributions to the field, connect its work to broader developments in artists' books, and share personal insights from decades of creating her own.



**John Warner, Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room A, Iowa City Public Library, 7 p.m.** Author and writing teacher John Warner discusses *More than Words*, which examines the impact of AI on writing and education, arguing that true writing is both thinking and feeling. Co-presented by the University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

## THURS, OCT. 9

**Tree Tour: Literary Grove at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, Dey House, Noon** Join University of Iowa Arborist

Andy Dahl for a tour of the Literary Grove, featuring trees with connections to famous authors at the world-famous Iowa Writers' Workshop.

**Guild of Book Workers Showcase & Market, Graduate by Hilton, noon - 5 p.m. (Oct. 9-11)**



**Teresa Dzeiglewicks, Porchlight Literary Arts Center, 7 p.m.** Dzeiglewicks will read from *Something Small of How to See a River*, poems that chronicle a vivid landscape of the struggle for sovereignty, dignity, and survival on the Standing Rock Reservation.

**Waters of the United States: A Conversation with Royal C. Gardner and Silvia Secchi, Prairie Lights, 7 p.m.** A reading from *Waters of the United States* and a discussion of the legal and political battles over water protection, the Clean Water Act, recent Supreme Court rulings, and what these decisions mean for our communities and environment. Presented in partnership with the Hubbell Environmental Law Initiative.

## FRI, OCT. 10

**Trials and Tribulations of Literary Translation, Iowa City Public Library, noon.** A panel featuring International Writing Program participants Tomás Downey (Argentina) and Florencia del Campo (Spain), with guest author Kazim Ali.

**SlamoVision judging event, Iowa City Public Library, 5:30 p.m.** Attendees will watch and then score submissions from slam poets in 17 other UNESCO Cities of Literature as part of the global SlamoVision competition. Free pizza will be served. These scores will be aggregated and submitted for the overall judging that will crown an international SlamoVision champion.

## SAT, OCT. 11

**Book Fair, MERGE, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.** A diverse collection of titles, journals, magazines, and book arts from local and regional publishers and literary organizations. A unique opportunity for book lovers to discover new authors and genres. See [www.iowacityofliterature.org/event/book-fair](http://www.iowacityofliterature.org/event/book-fair) for a complete list of vendors.

**Friend's Foundation Pop-Up Used Book Sale, Iowa City Public Library, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.** Stop by the lobby of the Iowa City Public Library

between festival events to browse for a new (to you) book.



**Laura Julier, Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room A, 10 a.m.** In her debut memoir, *Off Izaak Walton Road: The Grace That Comes Through Loss*, Laura Julier reflects on grief, solitude, and healing, drawing on her time in a riverside cabin surrounded by the quiet presence of nature. She will be in conversation with Thomas Dean.

**ICON Vendor Hall, Iowa City Masonic Building Social Hall, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

The ICON Science fiction convention returns to downtown Iowa City during the Iowa City Book Festival! Browse booksellers, authors, and others at the ICON Vendor Hall.

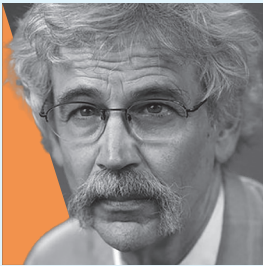


**Ted Geltner, Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room A, 11:30 a.m.** Journalist and biographer Ted Geltner discusses *Flagrant, Self-Destructive Gestures*, the story of Denis Johnson's turbulent life and extraordinary work, from his struggles with addiction to the creation of his masterpiece *Jesus' Son* and beyond.

**Gregory Galloway and Scott Phillips, Prairie Lights, 11:30 a.m.** Crime novelists Galloway and Phillips will discuss their latest books, Galloway's *All We Trust* and Phillips' *The Devil Raises His Own*.



**John Scalzi, Iowa City Masonic Building Auditorium, 11:30 a.m.** Bestselling science fiction author John Scalzi reads from *The Shattering Peace*, a thrilling interstellar tale in which humans and aliens are drawn into a high-stakes civil war that could reshape the fate of multiple species. Scalzi's acclaimed novels include the Old Man's War series, *Redshirts*, and *The Kaiju Preservation Society*.



**Art Cullen, Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room A, 1 p.m.** Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Art Cullen discusses his new book, *Dear Marty, We Crapped in Our Nest*, a reflection on the transformation of rural America, the loss of family farms, and the urgent environmental challenges facing our land and communities.



**Jennifer Fawcett, Prairie Lights, 1 p.m.** Former Iowa City playwright Fawcett returns with her second novel, *Keep This For Me*, a suspenseful tale of a woman investigating a serial killer's connection to her mother's disappearance.

**A celebration of Joe Haldeman and The Forever War, 1 p.m., Iowa City Masonic Building Auditorium** *The Forever War* was a groundbreaking science fiction novel upon its release in 1974, the first novel in that genre inspired by the Vietnam War. Haldeman, a veteran of that war and a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, wrote a book that author John Scalzi said “keeps speaking to readers outside its time, because what's in the book touches on something that never goes away, or at the very least keeps coming around.” Haldeman, his wife, Gay, Scalzi, and Haldeman's former student Mike Miller will discuss this groundbreaking novel, as well as ICON, the Iowa science fiction and fantasy convention celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Moderated by Pete Balestrieri.

**Incognito Lounge: Celebrating the work of Denis Johnson, Riverside Theatre, 2 p.m.** Friends and admirers of the late Denis Johnson read from and discuss

his work at this special event co-presented with FilmScene's Refocus Film Festival and the University of Iowa Office for Writing and Communication. Participants include Chris Offutt, Cindy Lee Johnson, Will Patton, Red Danielson, and James Galvin.

**Candle Light Press 30th Anniversary signing, Daydreams Comics, 2-4 p.m.** Celebrate three decades of storytelling with Iowa City's own Candle Light Press! Authors Carter Allen, Austin Allen Hamblin, and John Ira Thomas will be on hand to sign books and share their latest work.

**Christina Ward, Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room A, 2:30 p.m.** Ward, an independent food historian and writer discusses her latest book, *Holy Food: How Cults, Communes, and Religious Movements Influenced What We Eat*, a sort of history book/cookbook mashup.



**Tatiana Schlote-Bonne, Prairie Lights, 2:30 p.m.** Schlote-Bonne, a graduate of the University of Iowa's Nonfiction Writing Program, is the author of the YA horror novel *Such Lovely Skin*. Her latest is the adult horror novel *The Mean Ones*. Moderated by Carey Dunne.

**Panel discussion: A Sense of Place, Iowa City Masonic Building Auditorium, 2:30 p.m.** Jennifer Fawcett, Agnes, Chew (IWP), Siddharth Dasjupta (IWP), Ndongolera C. Mwangupili (IWP), and Vlora Konushevci (IWP) discuss the role of place and setting. (IWP = International Writing Program participant)

**Anna Barker, Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room A, 4 p.m.** Barker will discuss *13 Notes from Napoleon, Iowa: Musings on the Edge of the French Empire*, which illuminates aspects of Iowa's French past and explains the mystery of Iowa's distinctly French-looking flag.

CONTINUED >>

IOWA CITY  
*Book Festival*  
Presented by the Iowa City UNESCO City of Literature

Find the full schedule at  
[iowacitybookfestival.org](http://iowacitybookfestival.org)



Cole Swensen Named 2025 Paul Engle Prize Winner

Cole Swensen has been named the 14th recipient of the Paul Engle Prize, presented by the Iowa City UNESCO City of Literature organization. Swensen, a poet, editor, and translator, taught in the Iowa Writers' Workshop and at Brown University. She is the author of 20 collections of poetry, including *And And And*, *Gravesend*, *Goest*, *Try*, and *New Math*, and has translated more than 30 books of French poetry and nonfiction. Her awards include the 2024 National Translation Award, the 2025 Stephen Mitchell Translation Prize, and a Guggenheim Fellowship. She also founded and edited *La Presse*, an imprint dedicated to translating contemporary French poetry.

The prize, established in 2011, honors an individual who, like Paul Engle, represents a pioneering spirit in the world of literature through writing, editing, publishing, or teaching, and whose active participation in the larger issues of the day has contributed to the betterment of the world through the literary arts.

Swensen will receive the award at a ceremony at 2 p.m. on November 16, at the Coralville Public Library. The event is free and open to the public. The Paul Engle Prize is made possible through the generous support of the City of Coralville, which is home to 11 permanent sculptures with artistic and literary ties to Iowa.



While most City of Literature events are free to attend, they come with real costs. Your tax-deductible donation helps ensure we can continue offering meaningful programs like this festival.

Please consider supporting the City of Literature with a contribution today at [iowacitybookfestival.org/support](http://iowacitybookfestival.org/support)

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



Venues

1. Daydreams Comics, 229 E Washington St

2. Dream City, 611 Southgate Ave

3. Graduate by Hilton, 210 S Dubuque St

4. Iowa City Public Library, 123 S Linn St
5. Iowa City Masonic Building, 312 E College St

6. Iowa Writers' Workshop Lawn, 507 N Clinton St

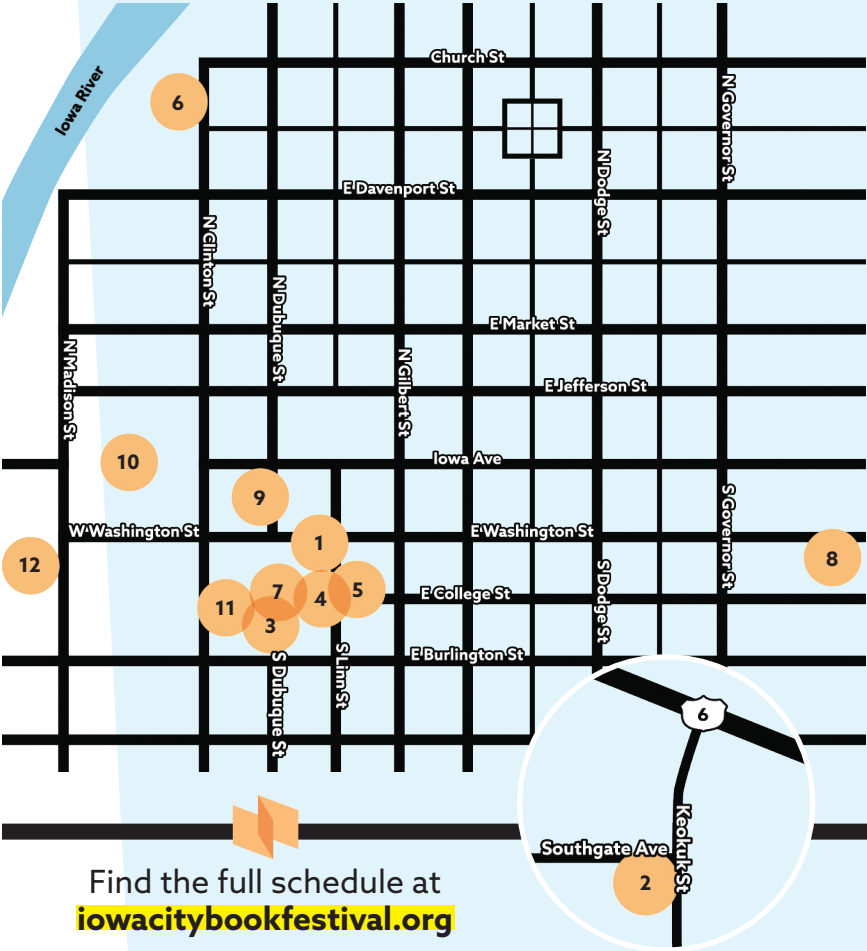
7. MERGE, 136 S Dubuque Street

8. Porch Light Literary Arts Center, 1019 E Washington St
9. Prairie Lights Books and Cafe, 15 S Dubuque St

10. Old Capitol Museum, 21 N Clinton St

11. ReUnion Brewery, 113 E College St

12. University of Iowa Main Library Gallery, 125 W Washington St



Find the full schedule at [iowacitybookfestival.org](http://iowacitybookfestival.org)

>> IOWA CITY BOOK FESTIVAL CONTINUED

**Patricia Lockwood, Prairie Lights, 4 p.m.** Lockwood, author of *No One Is Talking About This* and *Priestdaddy* returns with *Will There Ever Be Another You*, about a young woman trying to keep it together during a global pandemic.

**Panel discussion: The Importance of Literary Genres, Iowa City Masonic Building Auditorium, 4 p.m.** Anna Bruno, Gregory Galloway, Scott Phillips, and Tatiana Schlote-Bonne discuss the blurring of literary genres.

**John Ira Thomasn, Daydreams Comics, 4:30 p.m.** Join John Ira Thomas for a witty, metafictional ride through *Tire Magazine*, with readings from past issues and new work in progress. A playful mix of the mystical, the mundane, and the unexpected.

**It's Getting Plot in Here: Romance Book Festival, Sidekick Coffee & Books, 6-9 p.m.** Keep the fun going! Join Sidekick Coffee & Books for a brand-new celebration of romance writing. Enjoy an evening of romance reads, author meet-and-greets, bookish activities, and cozy fall vibes, complete with your favorite drinks and treats. Register at [sidekickcoffeebooks.com](http://sidekickcoffeebooks.com)

**SUN, OCT. 12 Author Book Fair, MERGE, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.** Join us as local authors present their latest works, answer questions, and sign books. Browse each author's table where various books will be available for purchase.



**Poetry in Public Reading with Special Guest Poet Daniel Umemezie, Iowa City Public Library, 12:30 p.m.** Poetry in Public celebrates our community's rich literary tradition and local writing talent by displaying poems by writers of all ages. Hear from some of the 2025 Selected Poets. Featuring Iowa's Student Poet Ambassador, Daniel Umemezie.

**Panel: Beyond Publishing: Writing as Joy, Healing, and Priority, MERGE, 1 p.m.** Join the conversation on how writing and reading shape lives, communities, and creative practice.

**The Black Superwoman & Mental Health: Power & Pain, Dream City, 2:30 p.m.** Contributors to the new anthology *The Black Superwoman & Mental Health: Power & Pain* join editors Venise Berry and Janette Taylor to discuss themes of vulnerability, resilience, and healing in poetry, stories, essays, and research.

**Kazim Ali with Rajaa Alsanea and Yu Yuen Lan, Prairie Lights, 3:30 p.m.** Poet, novelist, and essayist Kazim Ali will read as a special guest of the University of Iowa's International Writing Program. He is joined by IWP participants Rajaa Alsanea (Saudi Arabia) and Yu Yuen Lan (Hong Kong), who will also read from their work.



**Roast of Iowa City, ReUnion Brewery downtown, Doors open at 5:30 p.m.** We close a week of thoughtful discussions on poetry and prose with a now-beloved tradition: The Roast of Iowa City, an evening of playful mockery aimed at all we hold sacred and dear. This lively event is brought to you by our friends at Little Village Magazine.

Iowa City BOOK FESTIVAL Oct. 5-12, 2025

Bringing books to life



Find the full schedule at [iowacitybookfestival.org](http://iowacitybookfestival.org)

All Iowa City Book Festival-produced events free and open to the public. Program information available at [iowacitybookfestival.org](http://iowacitybookfestival.org)



Presented by the Iowa City UNESCO City of Literature



Support is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Iowa Arts Council, which exists within the Iowa Economic Development Authority