



Beyond Borders: Traveling Through Literature

**International Writers in Conversation at
The Bay Area Book Festival**

**Writers from Scandinavia, Ireland, Africa, Korea, Mexico, and the Middle East,
including Jussi Adler-Olsen, Lesley Nneka Arimah, Erik Axl Sund, Guadalupe Nettel,
Paul Murray, Krys Lee, and more**

June 3-4, 2017

Literary activism, our theme this year, involves embracing and promoting stories and perspectives from many cultures and regions around the world. Literature offers a deep dive into foreign places and people from backgrounds very different from our own. It is the next best thing to going there in person. And yet in the United States, only 3% of books published are works in translation. In this time when both xenophobia and migration are on the rise worldwide, we need to publish and read more books from other countries.

From its inception in 2015, the [Bay Area Book Festival](#) has presented the most robust list of international writers of any literary festival west of New York. This year, 21 writers are flying to the festival from 12 countries outside the United States, including Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Korea, Mexico, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories. The festival also presents three writers originally from Africa—Uganda and Nigeria—and others originally from Ecuador, Cuba, and other parts. Foundations, cultural institutes and consulates have supported the travel of writers to the festival from around the world.

All sessions will take place in venues in downtown Berkeley. Highlights of this year's conversations with **international** authors include:

- **The Legacy of Juan Rulfo: A Celebration** — Gabriel Garcia Marquez compared him to Sophocles in terms of influence. Susan Sontag wrote that Juan Rulfo’s single novel, ‘Pedro Páramo,’ is “one of the masterpieces of twentieth-century world literature.” What made Rulfo so extraordinary, and how has his influence reverberated throughout world literature? On the 100th anniversary of Rulfo’s birth in Jalisco, Mexico, this international panel of writers and artists, including **Mauro Javier Cárdenas, Enrique Chagoya, Cristina Rivera-Garza, Guadalupe Nettel, and Aura Xilonen**, moderated by **Jane Ciabattari**, board member of the National Book Critics Circle, introduces Rulfo to new readers and celebrates his legacy. (Saturday, June 3, 11:15am, at BAMPFA - Barbro Osher Theater, sponsored by the Consulate General of Mexico in San Francisco and the State of Jalisco)
- **Nordic Noir: The World’s Best Thrillers?** — Perhaps it’s those long, harsh winters or the literary tradition of violent sagas. Whatever the reason, Northern Europe has become a hotbed for bone-chilling thrillers. How do they do it? Does their own writing give them nightmares? Come hear Nordic masters **Thomas Rydahl** (Denmark), **Hans Olav Lahlum** (Norway), **Vidar Sundstol** (Norway) and **Erik Axl Sund** (a pseudonym for two writers from Sweden, both of whom join us today) as they illuminate what makes a thriller thrilling, and how these writers survive the experience. (Saturday, June 3, 3:30pm, at the Magnes Collection, sponsored by the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation, the Danish Arts Foundation, the Royal Danish Embassy, the Norway House Foundation, and NORLA - Norwegian Literature Abroad)
- **Reveal Live: Reporting, Writing and Being Between the Lines** — Borders have become central to today’s political and cultural landscape. In this special edition of Reveal Live, host **Al Letson** will take the audience through a journey that crosses many borders—physical and figurative, national and cultural, fictive and factual. Joining us are three writers: **Krys Lee** from Korea, **Guadalupe Nettel** from Mexico, and **Vanessa Hua** from the Chinese immigrant community in San Francisco. Where nationalism and nativism takes root, how can writers and journalists help people find common ground? How do they immerse audiences in perspectives that can change the status quo? (Sunday, June 4, 11:45am, at the Alta State at Freight & Salvage, sponsored by Center for Investigative Reporting, Margaret and Will Hearst, Literature Translation Institute of Korea (LTI Korea), the Consulate General of Mexico in San Francisco, and the State of Jalisco)
- **Living in Two Worlds: Crossing Borders and Identities to Create Home** — We all cross borders, whether geographical, emotional, or even digital. In our current age, humans are more mobile, and displaced, than they have ever been. These celebrated border-crossers and novelists have spent a great deal of time contemplating a life between the lines. How do we stay grounded in a world that’s constantly in flux? With **Lesley Nneka Arimah** (*What It Means When a Man Falls from the Sky*), **Laleh Khadivi** (*A Good Country*), and **Pajtim Statovci** (*My Cat Yugoslavia*). Moderated by the Center for the Art of Translation’s **Michael Holtmann**. (Sunday, June 4, 2:00pm,

at the Magnes Collection, sponsored by the Center for the Art of Translation, the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation, FILI - Finnish Literature Exchange, and Finlandia Foundation National)

- **First Books: What It Took to Get There** — There's a book in all of us, but what does it take to get it out into the world? Hear **Colin Barrett** (Ireland), **Jonas Luscher** (Switzerland), **Pajtim Statovci** (Finland), and **Aura Xilonen** (Mexico) give their expert advice on writing their first books and navigating the sometimes bumpy road to publication in their home countries and the United States. (Saturday, June 3, 10am, at the Hotel Shattuck Plaza - Boiler Room, sponsored by the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation, the Consulate General of Switzerland in San Francisco, Culture Ireland, FILI - Finnish Literature Exchange, Finlandia Foundation National, Pro Helvetia, the Consulate General of Mexico in San Francisco and the State of Jalisco)
- **Fiction at the Edges: Novelists on Trauma, Displacement, and Loss** — Debut novelist **Krys Lee**, in *How I Became A North Korean*, focuses on individuals in desperate circumstances. Lee's characters, forced into exile, must find ways to retain their humanity in the midst of aching upheaval. Joined in conversation with Berkeley author **Elizabeth Rosner**, these novelists will discuss the multitude of ways that literature can address modern life's most urgent and painful challenges. (Saturday, June 3, 1:30pm, at the David Brower Center - Goldman Theater, sponsored by the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation, Literature Translation Institute of Korea (LTI Korea), the Norway House Foundation, and NORLA - Norwegian Literature Abroad)
- **The Elusive Truth** — We know we can't trust everything we read online, but when it comes to fiction, where does truth fit in? Two engaging and entertaining novelists, **Jonas Hassen Khemiri** (Sweden) and **John Toomey** (Ireland), whose recent works involve mysterious deaths and the hunt for answers, tackle just such a question. Those who loved the podcast *Serial* won't want to miss this. (Saturday, June 3, 1:45pm, at the Magnes Collection, Sponsored by the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation and Culture Ireland)
- **Kingdom of Olives and Ash** — With the 50th anniversary of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank upon us, award-winning authors **Ayelet Waldman** and **Michael Chabon** invited an international roster of top-shelf writers to visit the Israeli-occupied territories on individual journeys of their own design. What followed were moving, heartbreaking, and infuriating stories from the people on the ground in the contested territories, stories that unearth the human cost of the conflict. Hear **Avner Gvaryahu** (Israel), **Fida Jiryis** (Palestine), and **Rachel Kushner** in person. The book is a benefit for Breaking the Silence, an organization made of former Israeli soldiers. (Sunday, June 4, 1:30pm, at the Alta Stage at Freight & Salvage, sponsored by the New Israel Fund and Anne Germanacos)

Jussi Adler-Olsen, the #1 bestselling author from Denmark, shares insights on his career and the process of crafting international sensations with *New York Times* bestselling San Francisco detective novelist **Cara Black**. Two Swedish crime writers known as **Erik Axl**

Sund and journalist **Michael Montgomery** examine the curious connection between crime novels and investigative reporting. **Stephen Sparks** discusses fiction and trauma with **Oddny Eir** (Iceland), **Jonas Hassen Khemiri** (Sweden), and **Katie Kitamura**. **Eir** later appears with **Geoff Dyer** to explore the connections between imagination and reality, place and identity, story and myth. Irish authors **Colin Barrett**, **Paul Murray**, and **John Toomey** discuss why their small, rocky island homeland has such outsize influence on world literature. African writers **Lesley Nneka Arimah**, **Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi**, and **Sarah Ladipo Manyika** discuss what it means to tell their own stories. And lighten the mood with different stories, and humorous ones, about different cultures' experiences of making and losing money from **Jonas Luscher** (Switzerland), **Paul Murray** (Ireland), and **Doree Shafir**.

For other sessions featuring international authors, [see the full schedule](#).

Festival speakers, including the international authors, are available for interviews by credentialed members of the press via email or Skype in advance of the festival, or in person over the weekend event. Outlet must be identified and assignment secured before the interview.

The festival logo and other images are [available here](#), and author photos are available by request. Please contact Anna Pulley, anna@baybookfest.org.