Berkeley, CA, April 15, 2020 – On May 1st, the Bay Area Book Festival launched the “Bay Area Book Festival #UNBOUND”: a series of world-class live and recorded virtual author programs on the Festival’s YouTube channel, designed to inform, inspire, console, and engage. #UNBOUND’s six-part nationally syndicated Voting Rights Series examines the foundation of democracy: the right to vote, and how it is being dangerously undermined. Scientists, physicians and psychologists offer expert advice on living your best life. Provocative thinkers, “do-ers,” and literary and social icons open their minds and hearts to in conversation about the world and our future. Leading children’s and Young Adult authors perform for kids and are interviewed by young readers, the toughest interrogators of all.

Adult programming airs every Tuesday and Thursday evenings, with Young Adult events on Wednesday evenings, and programs for young children and middle-graders on Saturday mornings. The Festival’s year-round Women Lit series has also gone virtual with Women Lit #UNBOUND to feature lunchtime live events exclusive for Women Lit members, with the recorded program later appearing as an evening Festival #UNBOUND event.

For tickets, online access, and the full #UNBOUND schedule and confirmed speakers, please visit baybookfest.org/unbound.

PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS FOR JUNE/JULY 2020

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Thursday, July 2nd, 7 pm: Food for Thought: Will Restaurants Survive?

Our neighborhood eateries and watering holes are more than places to gather and break bread. For patrons, they’re cornerstones of community life. And for staff, they’re a second home and a labor of love. But the public health risk from COVID-19 is radically reshaping the dining-out landscape in America, with thousands of restaurants forced to close permanently. Restaurants and restaurant workers are now facing a devastating new reality in an already tough industry. Many of them are minorities, people of color, and women. How do we support the people who keep us fed and make up the very structure of our daily lives?
Speakers include: Saru Jayaraman, president of One Fair Wage, an organization fighting for higher wages for tipped workers, many of them women of color. She’s joined by Caleb Zigas of La Cocina, an organization dedicated to creating equity in business ownership for women, immigrants, and people of color in the restaurant industry, and Soleil Ho, Restaurant Critic at the San Francisco Chronicle and former co-host of the Racist Sandwich podcast. Moderated by Davia Nelson, half (with her sister Nikki Silva) of the Peabody Award-winning public radio producer duo The Kitchen Sisters, whose series include NPR’s “Hidden Kitchens.”

ENVIRONMENT/NATURE/FOOD

Tuesday, July 7th, 12 pm: LIVE! Merlin Sheldrake and Michael Pollan on Entangled Life: What the Secret Social Networks of Fungi Reveal About Nature’s Genius and Being Human

As noted in a New Yorker profile by famed naturalist Robert Macfarlane attested, “[Merlin] was given a magical name and he grew into a magical person.” Moving from the labs of Cambridge to the jungles of Central America, Sheldrake discovered that fungi are an ancient underground communication network that undergirds the natural world and offers inspiration for rethinking human society. His riveting first book, Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds & Shape Our Futures, has become an instant classic of nature and philosophy — a work of rigorous science and poetic expression, drawing us into the mystery and meaning of this most magical life form.

In a live conversation, Merlin and bestselling nature and culture writer Michael Pollan (How to Change Your Mind, The Omnivore’s Dilemma) will delve into “The Wood Wide Web”: an enchanting “superorganism” whose secrets just might save the world.

LITERARY PROGRAMMING

Thursday, July 16th, 7 pm: Braving Deep Waters: Female Fearlessness and Friendship with Sue Monk Kidd and Lisa See

Dive into an exploration of female power and brilliance like you’ve never seen before with bestselling authors Sue Monk Kidd (The Secret Life of Bees, The Invention of Wings) and Lisa See (The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane) moderated by Aimee Phan (The Reeducation of Cherry Truong). Lisa’s latest novel, the multi-generational saga The Island of Sea Women, unforgettably brings us into the lives and adventures of Mi-ja and Young-sook, two best friends on the Korean island of Jeju, who join their village’s all-female diving collective at a tender age. Sue’s newest novel, The Book of Longings, praised by the New York Journal of Books as “a practically perfect historical novel...from a writer at the top of her game,” puts us in the skin of Ana, a gifted Galilee rebel whose chance encounter with Jesus Christ changes her life forever. Meet these
phenomenal authors at the fascinating intersection between tradition and bold self-realization, where the roles of friend, daughter, iconoclast, and artist converge.

CHILDREN/YOUTH

**Wednesday, June 24th, 7 pm: Ready, Set, Write: NaNoWriMo Middle Grade & Young Adult Challenge with the Bay Area Book Festival**
The Bay Area Book Festival is joining up with the hugely popular, community-building writing initiative National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo for short) for a special virtual “write-in” for middle-grade and high school writers, led by two popular YA guest authors, Mitali Perkins and Maggie Tokuda-Hall, who will provide writing tips and interactive prompts for participants. In this time of social isolation, NaNoWriMo has reported great demand for this communal, interactive “writing lab” that takes the self-consciousness and “inner editor” out of writing, sparks a spirit of playfulness and adventure, and includes options for participants to chat and build a sense of community.

**Saturday, July 11th, 11 am: Heroism in the Face of Tragedy**
One war, three continents, and a quartet of necessary voices in conversation. Seventh-graders Quinn Boyd-Roberts and Tej Wong interview bestselling authors Lois Lowry and Jan Terlouw in a fascinating look at war, heroism, and humanity that transcends geography, nationality, and time. With *On the Horizon*, two-time Newberry Award medalist Lowry draws from her own childhood memories of Hawaii and Japan in an honest and empathetic account of lives lost and forever altered by the twin tragedies of Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima. Jan Terlouw’s *Winter in Wartime* has been in print for almost fifty years, for good reason: this beloved novel, based on Terlouw’s own boyhood in wartime Holland, is a young-adult classic with the suspenseful pacing of a thriller. Heroism, not war, takes center stage in this conversation: the everyday heroism of young people in extraordinary times, drawn from a well of universal humanity.

LINKS, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND MORE

Photos, logos, and video teasers for #UNBOUND are downloadable at https://www.baybookfest.org/press-room/#presskitgallery

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