



Boston Authors Club

October 2018 Newsletter

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Congratulations to the Julia Ward Howe Prize Winners



Prize winners at the Boston Authors Club award program on September 26, 2018, from left to right: Cynthia Levinson (Young Readers), Rachel Kadish (Fiction), Frank Bidart (Poetry) and Jonathan Losos (Nonfiction).

Featured Author: Nancy Tupper Ling

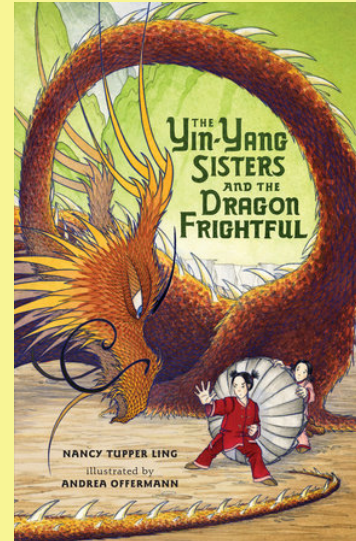


Nancy Tupper Ling is the author of *My Sister, Alicia May* (Pleasant Street Press), *Double Happiness* (Chronicle Books), and *The Story I'll Tell* (Lee & Low Books). Her latest book for children, *The Yin-Yang Sisters and the Dragon Frightful* (Putnam) is an original fairy tale about twin sisters Mei and Wei whose village has become encumbered by a very problematic dragon. Nancy is also the founder of Fine Line Poets a group of poets who seek to give voice to the experience of womanhood in contemporary times.

In this interview, Nancy talks about the inspiration for the setting and plot of the Yin-Yang Sisters, her book launch plans, and the connections between poetry and writing picture books.

Q: First, congratulations on the recent publication of *The Yin-Yang Sisters and the Dragon Frightful*! The book's fairy tale setting is a departure from your earlier works. Can you tell us what inspired this theme?

A: The inspiration for this book began at home. My daughters aren't twins but they have opposite personalities in many ways. When they were young, I was fascinated by the one (like Mei) desiring quiet and solace, while the other (like Wei) loved to be around action and people. I thought of them as my yin-yang girls. Then I wondered what if the two sisters had a whooper of a problem they had to solve together. Thus entered Frightful. My other favorite character is the wise auntie who is inspired by a real-life Auntie YiYi (2nd auntie). She taught my girls how to make origami flowers and about her life under communism in China. While the characters were inspired by people and personalities, the setting is like a traditional Chinese folk tale (because where else would dragons hang out?).



Q: Publication day is a major milestone, but for many authors it's also the kickoff of a round of book talks and promotional activities. What are your plans for promotion and marketing in the next few months?

A: You said it! It's always hard for authors who like their quiet writing time to forge ahead with all of the promotional aspects of book launches and school visits. Since we live in such an amazingly well-educated area (Boston), I feel blessed that I can keep much of my activity local. I'm also grateful to all of my local independent book stores. My book launch for *The Yin-Yang Sisters* will be on October 13th (11 am) at [The Blue Bunny](#) (Peter and Paul Reynolds' store in Dedham). I'm doing a group signing on Oct 22nd at [Wellesley Books](#) with Josh Funk, Emilie Boon, Ioana Hobai, & Annie Cronin Romano. After Thanksgiving, I'll be signing at Annie's Book Stop on November 24th in Worcester. All of these stores are fabulous at posting events on a variety of social media. In between all that and a trip to Seattle and Houston, I'll be working at my "normal" job at the Morrill Memorial Library in Norwood, MA.

Q: Do you have the plot line of your next book in mind already or are you considering a number of different story options?

Sometimes the story closest to our heart doesn't always get published right away. This is why I always tell anyone who wants to be an author, write a lot of stories. Don't just have one in your back pocket. We never know which will be picked first. My all-time favorite story was inspired by my father-in-law's immigration to America. Hint: it involves 7 bridges, one which is famous, and golden and stretches across the San Francisco Bay. This story was recently submitted to the editor of *The Yin-Yang Sisters*. Fingers crossed!

Q: You also write poetry and are the founder of Fine Line Poets. Do you feel there are similarities between poetry and writing for children?

I actually taught a workshop called "Stories Through a Poet's Eyes" because I believe there is a lot of interplay between poetry and writing picture books. I'm glad that I studied the art of poetry first because it thrives on making every word count. This act of paring down is so important when writing picture books as well. With 1000 words or less per manuscript, a picture book must be compact and power-packed. That said, a plot carries a picture book along too, and that stinky plot is often my downfall. I often hope the lyrical words alone can make a story, and they can't. A child need to be mesmerized by the story line as well. So, I'm always learning, but the two genres definitely find a meeting ground.



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News About BAC Authors

29th Season for The Writers Block With John Ronan

The 29th year of John Ronan's local TV program, *The Writer's Block*, kicks off on Thursday, October 4 with a show featuring student winners of this spring's Poetry Without Paper contest. This long-running series highlights the work of local poets and writers and artists, with the occasional celebrity visit.

Shows are produced at [1623 Studios](#), in Gloucester, Massachusetts, and cablecast to Gloucester, Essex, Manchester and Rockport. It is one of the longest, continuously running cable series in New England and celebrates its 29th anniversary with the 2018-19 season. Past shows are available through 1623 Studios and on YouTube.



The BAC newsletter is published the first week of every month.. Please send news about your activities, speaking, and new books (along with related pictures) to bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com by October 30 for publication in the November 2018 newsletter.

Yesteryear at the BAC by Scott Guthery

Hoisting the Family Flag

Isabel Weld Perkins Anderson, Litt. D., joined the Boston Authors Club in 1909. She was a prolific writer of poetry, books for children, travel books and family histories, publishing a lifetime total of 35 titles.

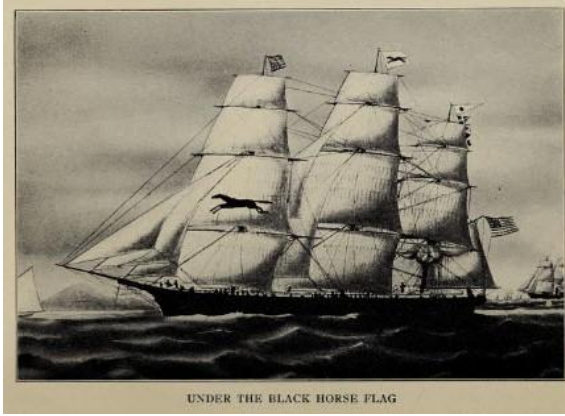
Her last book, *Under the Black Horse Flag*, could be taken for a sequel to her first children's book, *The Great Sea Horse*. But its subtitle, *Annals of the Weld family and some of its branches* gives away the plot. *Under the Black Horse Flag* was a Weld family history. For that matter, it still is.

Society portrait of Isable Weld Perkins Anderson painted in 1901 by Cecilia Beaux



In the Preface to *Under the Black Horse Flag*, Isabel writes,

This book is written for the family, and also, perhaps, for those who love the sea, for



my grandfather's firm, the William Fletcher Weld Company, outlasted most of the merchant ship-owning houses in Boston, and after the Civil War it had the largest sailing fleet in America. The Black Horse Flag, which flew above his clippers...

A big fleet, indeed. Fifty-one sailing ships and ten steamers are called out in the Appendix.

Anderson goes on to say in the Preface that she originally ``planned simply to collect and bind the logs of these clippers" but thinking that such would only be of interest to mariners, and, although she only hints at the possibility, marine historians, she decides to draw on family papers to tell the history of the fleet by spinning yarns.

And exciting yarns they are. I didn't consult the archives at Annapolis, but as far as I could tell there weren't many naval actions involving the United States during the nineteenth century that a Weld ship or Weld family member wasn't involved. There's William Gordon Weld in the good ship Jason taking on Algerian pirates under Gibraltar only to be captured by the British running into Boston Harbor during the War of 1812. Then comes William's son, William Fletcher, and Uncle Allen going yard arm to yard arm with Turks, Cilicians, Vikings, and Gauls off the Barbary coast.

Nor was China trade without its perils. Isabel notes multiple disasters at sea, *Often the fate of the ship is tragic. The ship Humboldt ... was dismantled and sold off the coast of Batavia. The William Sturgis was lost at the entrance of Iloilo. The brig Laurilla disappeared in 1862; she may have been captured ... but nobody knows. The ship Meridian was abandoned at sea only two weeks out from New York.*

Typhoons in the China Sea, the shelling of Fort Sumter, David Farragut, and the Confederate ram Tennessee all make cameo appearances in the Weld family history. Isabel's husband Larz Anderson, a notable figure in his own right, doesn't even come on stage until page 184, and can't compete for the reader's interest in the Black Horse flag's final tangle with two notorious female pirates, Ann Bonny and Mary Read down in Nassau

In the Boston area, Isabel is probably best remembered for bequeathing the Larz Anderson Museum to Brookline. But there are also three buildings at Boston University associated with her family, one of which houses the Isabel Anderson Library of Poetry.

Isabel doesn't say what happened to all the Weld family ship logs, but I would wager they still have a few yarns to tell.

One More 2019 Membership Reminder!

Full membership dues are \$50 annually and Associate memberships are \$25 annually for the calendar year. If you renew or join any time after October 1, you will be a paid up member through December 2019. You can join and renew online by [clicking here](#). If you would rather pay by check, please make your check out to Boston Authors Club and mail it to the following address:

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