



Boston Authors Club

September 2019 Newsletter

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CELEBRATE the BAC and this year's honored Boston authors at the Julia Ward Howe Awards event on *Tuesday, September 17, from 6PM to 8PM*. Join us for the awards presentation, book signing and remarks by the honored authors, and a free reception at the Boston Public Library, Copley Square, Orientation Room.

BAC Board Nominations and Committee Volunteers

Nominations are open for election to the BAC Board. To nominate a candidate (including yourself) email Mary Cronin, BAC president, at bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com by September 15, with a brief summary of the nominee's background, BAC interest, and contact information.

The BAC is also seeking volunteers to serve on our Event Planning Committee and Membership Committee. If you are interested, email to let us know!

Featured Author: Aine Greaney

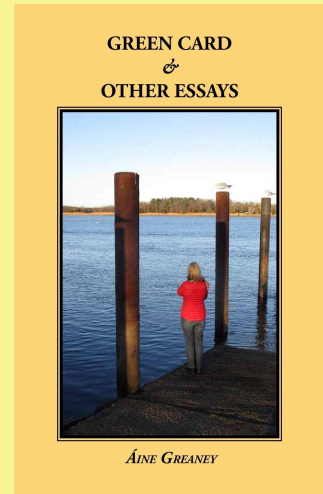
Áine Greaney, an Irish-born author who emigrated from Ireland to America at age 24 has published five books and numerous short works. In addition to writing novels, essays, and short stories, Greaney leads writing workshops on narrative medicine for healthcare providers, caregivers and wellness practitioners and for nonprofit

organizations that support immigrant, asylum, and refugee rights.



Q: Congratulations on your latest book, **Green Card & Other Essays**. Much of the book reflects on your personal experience of moving from Ireland to the U.S. in your twenties. At the same time, immigration is a such an urgent, global topic today. Did you think about balancing the personal and the political in putting together this book?

A: Thanks so much for your kind words, Mary. I think that the personal essay form challenges us to find a balance between the personal and the public or political. As essayists, we must find the universal in our own story and then, write or tell that story in a way that touches or influences our readers. When I wrote and published the individual essays (from *Green Card*), immigration wasn't quite such an incendiary issue in America. Then, last year, after I had found a publisher for this essay collection, I set about editing and sequencing the individual essays for this new, book-length format and within the context of our current political reality. So you could say that I wrote the essays during the age of relative ease and innocence, but re-wrote them from a place of malaise and outrage. While I was knee-deep in my book edits, one acquaintance told me that I needed to explain why a woman like me would write a book like this in the first place. This "need to explain" came as a surprise to me, but I took her advice and became more forthright about my own allegiances and opinions. For example, I write in one essay: "... My tenure or my whiteness are not a moral pass to shut the immigrant door behind me, or to reinvent a fear- or hubris-fueled version of my own and my adopted country's respective histories."



Q: Have you been surprised by any questions and comments have come up in your book talks and discussions about **Green Card**?

A: There have been four big surprises:
(1) How connected my American audience members feel to their own immigrant heritage. Even when it's someone's great grandfather who landed here, it's more than just an old or static story. Rather, that long-ago journey seems to inform these folks' present-day identity and 21st-century lives. (2) The number of folks who have told me: "All these years I've known you and I never thought of you as an immigrant; like, I never thought that you, too, had to work low-wage jobs and go through all that legalization stuff." This one harkens back to that issue in Question 1. We sometimes assume only those who are victims of our current broken immigration policies actually care. Or that someone like me will have become neutral or smug in the face of human rights violations against families. But I take all these anti-immigrant rhetoric and atrocities very personally—on my own behalf and on behalf of those who don't have a pen or a pulpit to speak out. (3) The third surprise has been how effective Ireland has been at re-casting and re-branding itself as a modern, socially progressive country. These days I get few or no audience questions fueled by the heretofore Irish stereotypes. Phew! It's so much easier to chat about our lives and our nationhood when there's a shared and more accurate understanding of those nations. (4) I'm very soft spoken, so I watch the surprise on folks' faces when I turn preachy and strident about the wellness or self-empowerment benefits of writing. Even at book events, I turn all evangelical as I urge beginner or hesitant writers to go home and start writing down their own truths.

Q: I'm intrigued by **Writer with a Day Job**, your 2011 book about strategies for fitting writing into a busy work life. What pieces of advice for writing while working a day job have helped you the most?

A: There are two advice tips from **Writer with a Day Job** that still guide my own writing life and that I draw upon when I'm preparing or teaching writing workshop. (1) Never ignore or leave your writing unvisited—regardless of how busy your job or your family life is. On your daily commute, or while stuck on a flight or in a long work meeting, plan and plot and edit inside your head. Ask your characters questions. Always keep a notebook or a simple phone app (I use "checklist") for those quick ideas and notes. (2) Set and stick to your own writing goals. Nowadays it's tempting to write something hot and topical—something that will garner social media "buzz." But before you write a piece ask yourself: "Does this really fit with me and my established writing goals?"

Q: Do you like working on multiple writing projects at once, or do you focus on just one piece at a time?

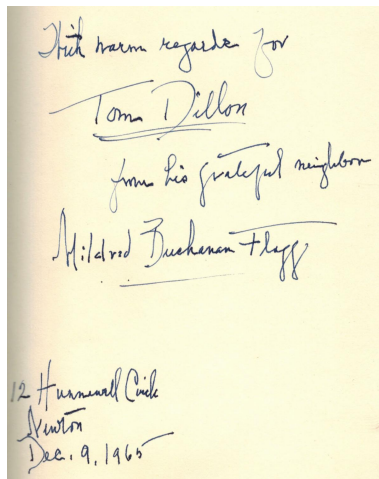
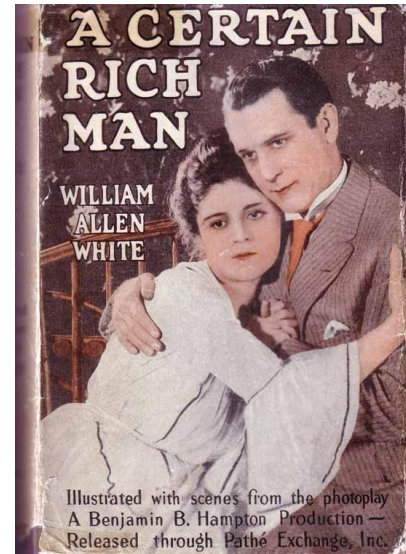
A: I'm always working on at least two or three essays. I have one narrative medicine piece that I keep re-working for the past 15 or more years. For over a year I've been writing the first draft of a third novel, "Poor Banished Children." I already know that the second draft will include big rewrites and structural changes. I still work a busy day job in communications, so like other day-job writers, I have to be vigilant and stubborn about where I spend my creative energies and where my life priorities lie.

Author website: <http://www.ainegreaney.com/bio>
Interview by Mary Cronin

YESTERYEAR AT THE BAC by Scott Guthery Mildred B. Flagg

Chronicling BAC Authors, With a Side of Ghost-Writing Novels

Mildred Buchanan Flagg, Litt.D., L.H.D., is the author of the book that often serves as the starting line for many of the stories in this column, *Notable Boston Authors: Boston Authors Club, 1900-1966*, published in 1965 by Dresser, Chapman & Grimes of Cambridge, MA. In her Author's Note, Flagg writes "Many of our more distinguished members are to be reported in a second volume" and indeed the catalog of the Boston Athenaeum shows *Boston Authors Now and Then: More Members of the Boston Authors Club, 1900-1966*, published in 1966, with the note "Sequel to Notable Authors." Both books contain 269 pages and a foreword by Erwin D. Canham and the biography of Mark Twain which is said to be in the second of the two is also in the first so we have a bit of a biblio-mystery for a future column.



My own copy of *Notable Boston Authors* is a presentation copy given by Mildred Flagg to her neighbor, Tom Dillon, on Hunnewell Circle in Newton. Dillon lived at 18 Hunnewell Circle and was president of the insurance branch of the John T. Burns Insurance Co.

Flagg's personal papers are held in two archives, one in the Schlesinger Library at Harvard of 1.67 linear feet and the other at Syracuse University of 1.75 linear feet. 'Linear' feet as opposed to, I imagine, cubic feet. The cubic measure of archives is often given as the 'box' which is either 1.04 or 0.369 cubic feet depending on the kind of box. The Harvard archive is in four boxes so they are using the

smaller, vertical box with a width of 5 inches.

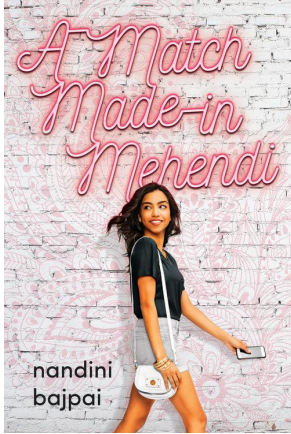
The description of the Schlesinger archive tells us that the archive contains "a collection of letters, many quite personal ... from important people in all fields" as well as Flagg's autograph collection. WorldCat lists the individuals whose autographs are in the collection and it is quite a collection including, for example, Tennessee Williams and J. Robert Oppenheimer. The description of the archive also notes that Mrs. Flagg was the organizer of Celebrity Breakfasts, 1945-1949. I have not been able to find any further information on the Celebrity Breakfasts.

In her own entry in *Notable Authors*, Flagg writes she "has written several text books ... and is a prolific 'ghost writer'." She doesn't mention the celebrity breakfasts but does note her editorship of William Allen White's *A Certain Rich Man*. This book was originally published in 1923.

Flagg added end notes and discussion questions for an edition of the book that was published as part of Macmillan's Modern Readers' Series. For example, "(p.) 35: 2. Daguerreotype. An early variety of photograph invented by Daguerre, who was put into an asylum for saying he could transfer the likeness of human beings to a 'tin plate.'" The reality is that while Daguerre's wife and his physician plotted to have him committed, he solved the problem that that was at the root of his purported hallucinations -- holding an image on a silver plate; i.e. photography -- and returned to normal. The hallucinations may have been caused as much by the chemicals Daguerre was working with as by his seemingly maniacal quest.

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AUTHORS!

News About BAC Authors



Nandini Bajpai's new YA novel, **A Match Made in Mehendi** will be published on September 10th with Little Brown Books for Young Readers.

Everyone is invited to the book launch on Saturday, September 14th at 2pm at Wellesley Books, 82 Central Street, Wellesley MA.

Poet Helen Marie Casey has several poems recently published or about to be published: "Aviator" in Sweet Lit; "All Aboard" and "Nicoletta Comes to America" in Rock & Sling; "Lot's Wife in the Pines" in "The Comstock Review"; "Josephine's Roses" in Guesthouse where Helen was a finalist for the Penny-Farthing Prize; "Peony" in The Worcester Review; "Another Christmas Story" in The Christian Century; and "It Happens at Laurelhurst Park" to appear in The Paterson Literary Review.



The BAC newsletter is published the first week of every month, except during the summer. Please send news about your activities, speaking, and new books (along with related pictures) to bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com by September 28 for publication in the October newsletter.

Full membership dues are \$50 annually and Associate memberships are \$25 annually for the calendar year. If you renew or join any time during 2019, 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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