



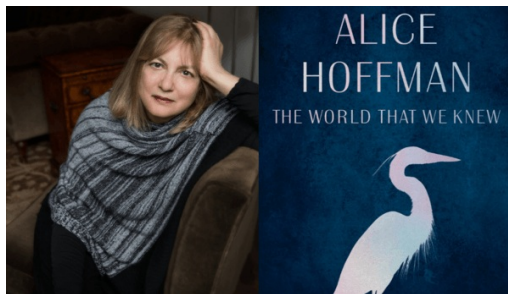
Boston Authors Club

November 2020 Newsletter

In This Issue

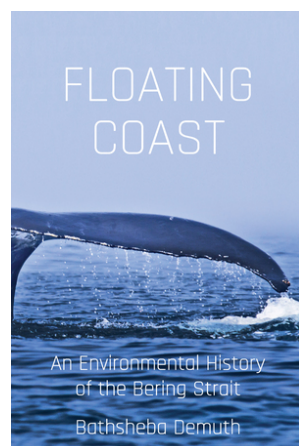
- **Announcing the JWH Awards - Honored Books and Authors**
- **President's Note: Double Award Winner Celebration for 2021**
- **Write the World: Novel Writing Competition for Teens**
- **Yesteryear at the BAC: Famous Outside Boston**

Congratulations to This Year's Honored Julia Ward Howe Authors!



FICTION

**Winner: Alice Hoffman for
*The World That We Knew***



NONFICTION

**Winner: Bathsheba Demuth
for *Floating Coast***

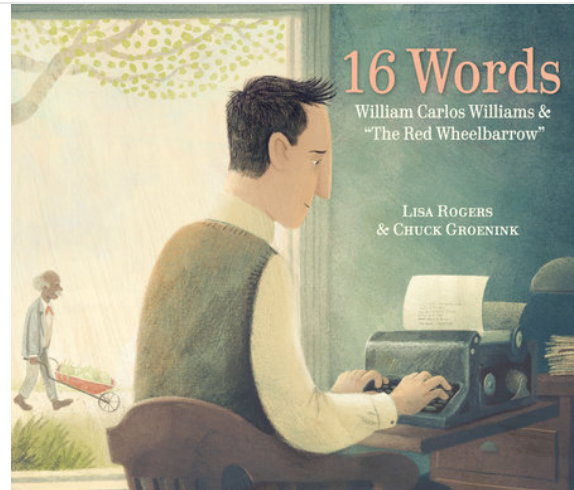


POETRY

**Winner: Edgar Kunz for
*Tap Out***

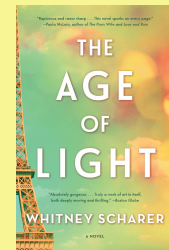


YOUNG READERS
Winner: Lisa Rogers for
16 Words



Fiction Finalists

- Mona Awad for *Bunny*
- Whitney Scharer for *The Age of Light*

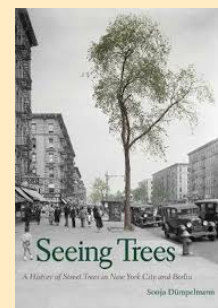


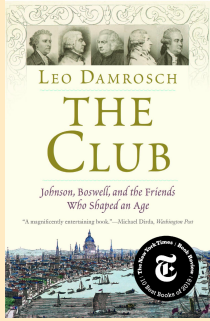
Non-Fiction Finalists

- Leo Damrosch for *The Club*
- Sonja Dumpelmann for *Seeing Trees*
- Holly Jackson for *American Radicals*

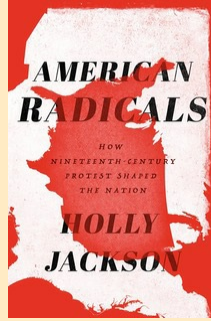
Non-Fiction Honorable Mention

- Joan Wheelis for *The Known, the Secret, the Forgotten*

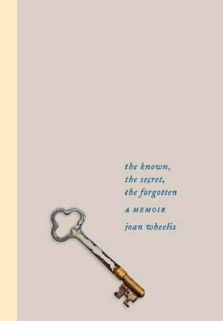




Leo Damrosch



Holly Jackson

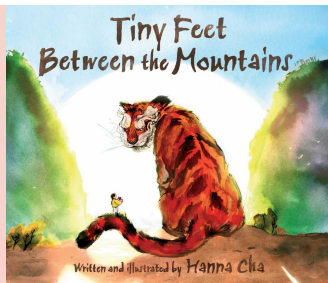


Joan Wheelis



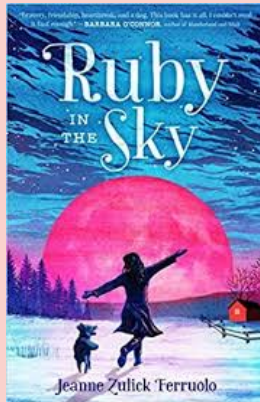
Poetry Finalist

- Leslie Williams for *Even the Dark*



Young Reader Finalists

- Hayley Barrett for *What Miss Mitchell Saw*
- Hanna Cha for *Tiny Feet Between the Mountains*
- Jeanne Zulick Ferruolo for *Ruby in the Sky*



Announcing a November Novel-Writing Competition for Teens

The Boston Authors Club is partnering with Write the World to promote their **November Novel Writing Competition**. Entry is free, and the winning entrant receives a \$100 cash prize; a runner-up and the best peer reviewer each receive \$50. **All three winners will be featured on the Write the World blog**. *Please spread the word to all the teen writers you know, and encourage them to submit a 600-1000 word novel excerpt to Write the World online at: <https://writetheworld.com/competitions>*



Each month Write the World holds a new competition, developed around a particular idea or genre of writing, such as poetry, fiction, scriptwriting, and nonfiction. Competitions encourage young writers (13 to 19 years old) to dig deeper into the writing process, try out new genres and share their work with a supportive community of peer readers.

Novel Writing Competition for Teens Opens: 11/2/20
Deadline to Submit an Entry for Expert Review: 11/9/20
Final Entries Are Due: 11/17/20

For more information, visit Write the World or email hello@writetheworld.com

BAC President's Note

November greetings to all my fellow BAC members!

As you'll see elsewhere in this newsletter, we're thrilled to be announcing the 2019 winners and finalists for our Julia Ward Howe prizes in fiction, non-fiction, poetry and young readers. We will be featuring interviews with our award winners in upcoming editions of the BAC Newsletter. The BAC Board has decided that rather than having a ceremony on Zoom this fall, we'll wait until we can (hopefully) have an in-person ceremony next fall at the Boston Public Library, at which time we will honor both the 2019 and 2020 recipients.

And speaking of the 2020 recipients, I have already started to receive the entries! If you are interested in serving on one of our four reading committees and helping to select the winners, please let me know. It's a great way to read some excellent books you might not otherwise be reading, and to have wonderful conversations about them with other deeply engaged readers.

Wishing you all health and calm during these unsettling days -

Julie Dobrow
BAC President

Yesteryear: Famous Outside Boston

"Though her novels were popular in her time, it is said they are 'hardly worth reading today'..." is the lead sentence of a thumbnail biography in Volume II of Mildred Flagg's catalog of members of the Boston Authors Club. A strange lead, because the vast majority of Flagg's sketches of Boston authors glow with over-the-top compliments no matter how slight the accomplishment.

The author on the receiving end of this chilly introduction was Alice French, "known to her public as Octave Thanet." Flagg goes on to observe "Many of her readers did not know whether she was a man or a woman" and that "Miss French never married, so she had more than the usual leisure for Club and community activities."



Additional research reveals that Alice French, pictured above, was born in Andover, MA in 1850 and joined the Boston Authors Club in 1903. Her literary output under the name of Octave Thanet encompass ten books and fifty short stories. One of her books, "Man of the Hour," rose to fourth place on a best seller list in 1905. French wrote many of her works in the local color tradition and some of her biographers credit her with popularizing the form in America. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that her biography in the *Encyclopedia of Arkansas* is much more upbeat than that provided by Flagg. Her contemporary reviewers took particular note of her knowledgeable literary

renderings of the details of speech. The encyclopedia article says French “collected lists of curious dialect phrases and pronunciation...”

In addition to her prolific writing, French had a woodworking shop where she made furniture and a darkroom where she “developed and printed photographs with chemicals she mixed herself.” In fact, one of her books is about photography: *An Adventure in Photography: Illustrated from Photographs by the Adventurers*, published in 1893 by Scribner. The book includes long chapters on French’s experiments with photographic chemicals.

The Adventurers of the title are Alice herself and her companion, Jane Allen Crawford. The two lived together in a plantation home in Clover Bend, Arkansas, that they called Thanford, which, according to the encyclopedia, was “the setting for their literary and social activities, entertaining the great and near-great with luxurious meals and fine wines in effective contrast with their wilderness surroundings.”

Alice French has a Wikipedia page dedicated to her biography and publications, as well as pages describing her homes in Davenport, Iowa, and Clover Bend, Arkansas. She is the subject of a book, *Journey to Obscurity: The Life of Octave Thanet* by George McMichael, published in 1965 by the University of Nebraska Press. Her life and works are the subject of two PhD dissertations. Her papers are to be found at The Newberry Library.

Are her publications still worth reading today? Perhaps we shouldn’t take Mildred Flagg’s word on that.

Scott B. Guthery

The Essential Doug Holder: New and Selected Poems

Doug Holder, Lecturer of Creative Writing at Endicott College, and the founder of the Ibbetson Street Press, has released a new book of verse, *The Essential Doug Holder: New and Selected Poems* published by Big Table Books.

In addition to his teaching, publishing, and poetry writing, Doug writes a regular poetry column for The Somerville Times. You can read it [here](#).



SEND US YOUR NEWS !

Please send news about your activities, speaking, and new books (along with related pictures) to bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com by November 28 for publication in the December 2020 newsletter.

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Boston Authors Club

