



Boston Authors Club

August 2021 Newsletter

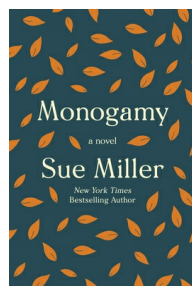
In This Issue

- **Announcing the JWH Awards - Honored Books and Authors**
- **Currently Reading: Poet Gregory LeStage**
- **Double Celebration Event for Award Winners - Details in September**
- **Yesteryear at the BAC: Poetry Is In the Cards**

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

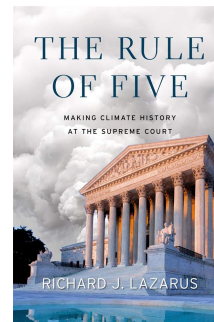
FICTION

**Winner: Sue Miller for
*Monogamy***



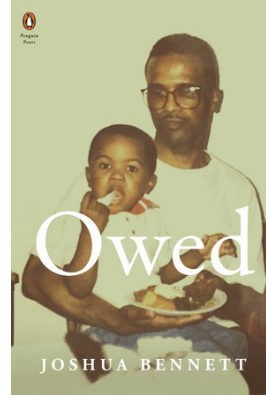
NONFICTION

**Winner: Richard J. Lazarus for
*The Rule of Five***



POETRY

Winner: Joshua Bennett for

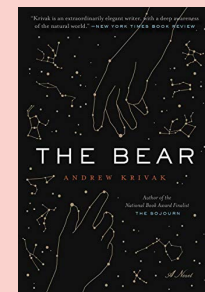
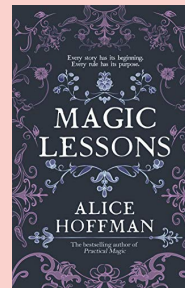


YOUNG READERS

Winner: Tiffany Jewell for
This Book is Anti-Racist

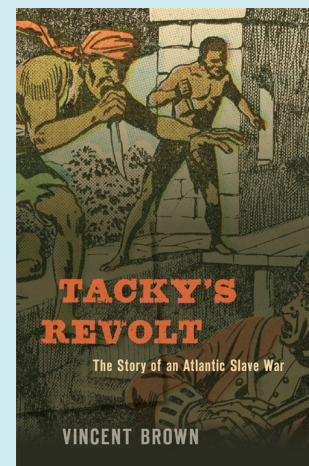
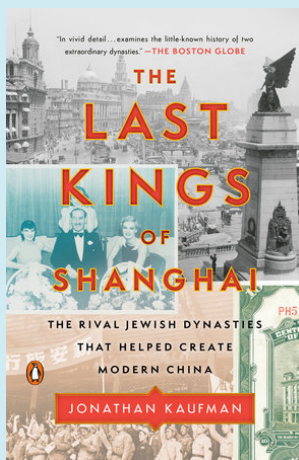
Fiction Finalists

- Alice Hoffman for *Magic Lessons*
- Andrew Krivak for *The Bear*



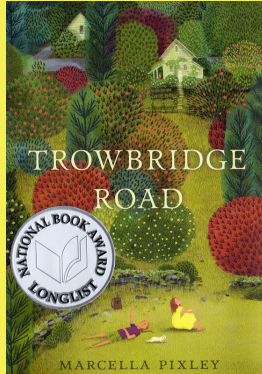
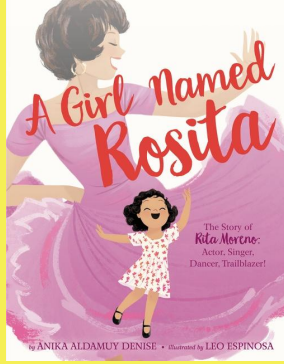
Nonfiction Finalists

- Vincent Brown for *Tacky's Revolt*
- Jonathan Kaufman for *The Last Kings of Shanghai*

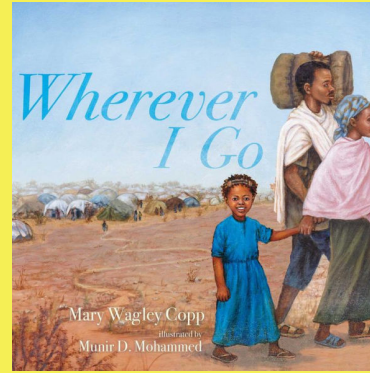


Young Reader Finalists

- Anika Aldamuy Denise for *A Girl Named Rosita*
- Marcella Pixley for



- Trowbridge Road**
- **Mary Wagley for *Wherever I Go***



Currently Reading: Gregory LeStage

Gregory LeStage is a former academic who left university life for the challenges of the business world. He is now a senior executive in a global management consulting firm.

*Writing poetry is also a serious venture for him. **Small Gods of Summer** was a finalist for the Eric Hoffer Prize, and **Hope Is a Small Barn** was the runner-up for the Julia Ward Howe Prize. Both were published by Antrim House Books. He is currently working on his next collection.*



What are you reading right now?

I'm reading two titles. The first is *Sapiens* by Yuval Noah Harari (2011), an enthralling journey through 70,000 years of our species' development. I'm forever fascinated by individual and collective human behavior – why we are how we are – and this book has opened my eyes wide. I'm trying to bring this deepening understanding to my own writing, which is what brought me recently to the second title, Mary Oliver's *A Poetry Handbook* (1994).

What inspired you to pick up this title?

I'm in the midst of writing my next collection of poems and have been moving more slowly than I would like. I felt as if I was drifting and needed an anchor in the form's elements, mechanisms, and music. Mary Oliver's book is serving that purpose.

What is your impression of the book so far?

There are many such books on the market, but this one stands out because of the manner in which she has written it: clear, structured, brief, plainspoken. Poetry, including handbooks and criticism, has a way of going deep and complicated quickly. I think this is why writers, readers, listeners turn away from it. Her book makes poetry available. It's as accessible and useful to the new poet as it is relevant and guiding to the seasoned one. But it's not mechanical or atonal, despite its "how to" approach: Oliver's voice – exuberant and humble – is like a silver thread.

The basis of the book is Oliver's belief that artists, including poets, "require a lively acquaintance with the history of their particular field and with past as well as current theories and techniques." So, she focuses on the craft – that "part of the poem that is a

written document, as opposed to a mystical document." While she evokes and honors the mystical, she sticks with the practical.

Rating:

So far, I'd give this book a 5.

Interview by Kate Farrell

Double Celebration for JWH Winners

WHAT WE KNOW: *This fall the BAC will celebrate both the 2019 and 2020 authors and books selected as Julia Ward Howe Prize Winners and Finalists.*

WHAT'S STILL UNDER DISCUSSION: *Will we be able to meet in person for the traditional JWH Award Event and reception? The BAC Board will make a decision in September. Please stay tuned for an announcement about the celebration date and location in the September newsletter.*

Yesteryear: Poetry Is In the Cards

**"Boston is a funny town,
You often lose your way;
Its winding streets still puzzle those
Who've been here many a day."**

Fred Winslow Rust joined the Boston Authors Club in 1937. At the time, he was a poet and publisher residing in Newtonville.

According to the unofficial antiquarian of the Boston Authors Club, Margaret Buchanan Flagg, Fred "...was the first to conceive the idea of publishing greeting cards in verse..." I thought I recognized that metric line about Boston streets.

Before moving east and becoming an author and publisher, Fred ran a little bookshop in Kansas City, Missouri. Around 1906 he published what some sources claim to be America's first Christmas card, and it was an instant success. (For the record, the Greeting Card Association disputes this claim, stating that Louis Prang published the first American Christmas card in Boston in 1856.)

Capitalizing on his Christmas card success, Fred started the Rust Craft Greeting Card Company and soon added Valentine, Easter and St. Patrick's Day, Bon Voyage, and Braille cards to his catalog. Sometime around 1915, Fred moved to Boston, married the former Helen Frances Brant of Newtonville, and set up his greeting card business at 1000 Washington Street. In 1954 he moved the Rust Craft Greeting to Dedham, where he built a new facility on RustCraft Road where it did business until 1980 when it was purchased by Ziff Davis and folded into Norcross Greeting Card in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Fred's first poetry book was *A Song of Nassau and other Verses*, published in 1935 by Rust Craft Publishers. This was followed by *Unto the Hills and other Verses* in 1936 and *The Road Ahead and Bypaths* in 1944, both published in Boston by B. Humphries. Besides being a poet and a publisher, Fred was also something of an engineering whiz. He revolutionized the use of the "French Fold" greeting card and was the first to sell greeting cards with a fitted envelope. Fred must have come to poetry after he moved to Boston because the verse lines in his first Christmas card was by Henry Van Dyke ...

"Without pretense and in plain words, goodwill to you is what I mean, in the spirit of Christmas."

Fred Rust's papers are in the Maine State Library.

By Scott B. Guthery



*Please send news about your activities, speaking, and new books (along with related pictures) to bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com by **AUGUST 30** for publication in the September newsletter.*

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