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Radical Nonfiction Storytelling, Mentor Series Reading: Dani Shapiro, *The Sympathizer* by Viet Thanh Nguyen, and other May 2015 Events

At-A-Glance:
5/1: Books: Compass in the Storm
5/1: Radical Nonfiction Storytelling
5/8: Reading with Michael Dennis Browne, John Hildebrand, and Madelon Sprengnether
5/9: EQ: Christy NaMee Eriksen
5/11: Asian Americans: How We Talk (and Dance and Sing) About Ourselves
5/15: Mentor Series Reading: Dani Shapiro
5/18: *The Sympathizer* by Viet Thanh Nguyen

Unless otherwise noted, all events are free, open to the public, and take place at
The Loft Literary Center at Open Book
1011 Washington Avenue South, Minneapolis

BOOKS: COMPASS IN THE STORM
*Friday, May 1, 7 p.m.*
Vaunda Micheaux Nelson will discuss how books and writing help navigate life and the roles bookstores and libraries play. The author will give special focus to her great uncle, Lewis Michaux, and his National Memorial African Bookstore of Harlem’s past.

**Vaunda Micheaux Nelson** is the author of many books for young readers, including *Bad News for Outlaws: The Remarkable Life of Bass Reeves, Deputy U.S. Marshal*, which won the Coretta Scott King Award in 2010, and *No Crystal Stair*, which won a Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for Fiction in 2012. Vaunda is a youth services librarian at the public library in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, where she lives with her husband.

*Books: Compass in the Storm is free and open to the public. This event (along with the immediately following Radical Nonfiction Storytelling with Andrew Karre) kicks off the Children's and Young Adult Literature Conference (May 1–3, 2015).*
RADICAL NONFICTION STORYTELLING
Friday, May 1, 8 p.m.
How can picture book authors chronicle and make sense of our difficult past and acknowledge the uncertain present? A panel of picture book writers will talk about how they treat tough subjects for very young audiences. Panel moderated by Andrew Karre and featuring Carol Hinz, Vaunda Nelson, and John Coy.

Andrew Karre is executive editor at Dutton Children’s Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House, a position he assumed in 2015. He acquires young adult and middle grade fiction and nonfiction. Karre helped launch the YA imprint Flux in 2006, and he has been editorial director at Lerner Publishing Group for the last six years, overseeing Carolrhoda Books and founding the YA imprint Carolrhoda Lab. He has published first novels by such acclaimed authors as Maggie Stiefvater, A.S. King, Carrie Jones, Blythe Woolston, and Carrie Mesrobian. He was Vaunda Micheaux Nelson’s editor for the award winning No Crystal Stair.

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READING WITH MICHAEL DENNIS BROWNE, JOHN HILDEBRAND, AND MADELON SPRENGNATHER
Friday, May 8, 7 p.m.
John Hildebrand, Madelon Sprengnather, and Michael Dennis Brown Launch New Works of Memoir and Poetry

Michael Dennis Browne’s most recent collection of poems, The Voices, was recently published by Carnegie Mellon University Press. Other recent publications include poetry collection Things I Can’t Tell You, (Carnegie Mellon, 2005) and What the Poem Wants, essays on poetry (Carnegie Mellon, 2008). Browne’s poems have been published in many magazines and anthologies, and his awards include fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Bush Foundation, the Jerome Foundation, and the McKnight Foundation. Two of his collections have won the Minnesota Book Award for poetry. As a librettist, he has written many texts for music, working principally with composer Stephen Paulus, and recently also with Craig Hella Johnson, Abbie Betinis, and Tim Takach. He is a professor emeritus of English at the University of Minnesota, where he taught for thirty-nine years and was a member of the Academy of Distinguished Teachers. His website is michaeldennisbrowne.com.

John Hildebrand is the author of four books: Reading the River: A Voyage Down the Yukon, Mapping the Farm: The Chronicle of a Family, A Northern Front: New and Selected Essays, and most recently The Heart of Things: A Midwestern Almanac. His articles and essays have appeared in Harper's Magazine, Audubon, Sports Illustrated, and Outside. He is the recipient of a Minnesota Book Award, a Banta Award from the Wisconsin Library Association, a Bush Artist Fellowship, and a Wisconsin Arts Board Fellowship. He teaches at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

**EQ: CHRISTY NAMEE ERIKSEN**  
*Saturday, May 9, 8 p.m. $5/free for Loft members.*

The Loft’s award-winning spoken word series, Equilibrium, continues with award-winning Korean Adoptee spoken word artist, activist, and educator Christy NaMee Eriksen headlining.

Christy NaMee Eriksen is an award-winning Korean Adoptee spoken word artist, activist, and educator based in Juneau, Alaska. Her work is grounded in social justice and community engagement. She is the co-founder and President of the nonprofit, Woosh Kinaadeiyí, a community arts organization that hosts monthly open mics and poetry slams, committed to “diversity, inclusive community, and empowering voice.” She has performed at art centers, universities, and theatres, including The Roundhouse in London and Equilibrium’s spoken word series in Minneapolis. She has been published in a variety of online and print publications and leads spoken word workshops and residencies for diverse groups. Christy received a 2011 Juneau Arts & Humanities Council Individual Artist Grant, was awarded the 2013 Mayor’s Award for Artist of the Year, and is a Rasmuson Foundation Individual Artist Award recipient. Christy recently received the 2013 Loft Immersion Fellowship. She has a BA in Social Justice/Racial Justice and a Certificate in Conflict Studies from Hamline University.

**ASIAN AMERICANS: HOW WE TALK (AND DANCE AND SING) ABOUT OURSELVES**  
*Monday, May 11, 7 p.m.*

Writer David Mura will conduct a conversation on the arts and race with three nationally prominent Asian American artists—poet and spoken word artist Bao Phi, community organizer Linda Her, and dancer/choreographer Ananya Chaterjea, founder of the Ananya Dance Theatre. Among our topics: the position of Asian Americans in American society, culture and history; the intersections between Asian Americans and other communities of color; and the complex issues facing Asian American artists. A key subject will be Asian American arts activism, including ADT’s mission of social justice as well as the protests over the Ordway’s production of Miss Saigon and the shooting of Fong Lee by a Minneapolis policeman.

Among Asian Americans, the Twin Cities have come to be regarded as a key center for Asian American arts and activism. Locally, though, Asian Americans are still not integral to most people’s picture of Minnesota. Similarly, in so many conversations about race, Asian Americans are either not included or are relegated to an “add on” to other people of color. Our panel will address these silences, omissions and omissions, and provide a
more nuanced and complex view of Asian Americans and Asian American artists.

This conversation is part of a series of four conversations on the arts and race at the Loft as part of David Mura’s Arts Initiative Grant. David Mura is a fiscal year 2015 recipient of an Artist Initiative grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

MENTOR SERIES READING: DANI SHAPIRO
Friday, May 15, 7 p.m.
The 2014–15 Loft Mentor Series in Poetry and Creative Prose presents nonfiction mentor Dani Shapiro reading along with program participants Molly Cooney (nonfiction) and Mary Stein (fiction).

Dani Shapiro is the bestselling author of the memoirs Devotion and Slow Motion, and five novels including Black & White and Family History. Her work has appeared in The New Yorker, Granta, Tin House, One Story, Elle, The New York Times Book Review, The Los Angeles Times, and has been widely anthologized. She has taught in the writing programs at Columbia, NYU, The New School, and Wesleyan University, and she is co-founder of the Sirenland Writers Conference in Positano, Italy. She is a contributing editor at Travel + Leisure. She lives with her family in Litchfield County, Connecticut. Her new book, Still Writing: The Perils and Pleasures of a Creative Life, was published in 2013.

Molly Cooney is a queer writer, mother, and teacher, who spends as much time as possible outdoors. She graduated with her MFA in creative nonfiction from the University of Arizona, and her work has appeared in The Gettysburg Review and The North Dakota Quarterly. When she’s not paddling in Arctic rivers or backpacking in the mountains, Molly lives in a century-old house with her partner, one-year-old baby, and four-legged friends.

Mary Stein’s fiction can be found or is forthcoming in Caketrain, The Brooklyn Rail, The Doctor T.J. Eckleburg Review, and Spartan Lit. Her critical writing can be found online at Numéro Cinq. She received her MFA from the Vermont College of Fine Arts and has been nominated for New Stories from the Midwest. She currently teaches through the Minnesota Prison Writing Workshops and is the assistant editor of Conduit literary magazine.

THE SYMPATHIZER BY VIET THANH NGUYEN
Monday, May 18, 7 p.m. Suggested Admission: $5 (no one turned away for lack of funds).
The Sympathizer centers on a captain in the South Vietnamese army who relocates to Los Angeles with several of his comrades in 1975. Unbeknownst to his comrades, the captain is reporting on the group’s activities to a superior in the Communist-allied Vietcong. Nguyen weaves details about what it was like to be Vietnamese in America after the war, and the role of Hollywood in shaping national attitudes about conflict, into this spy novel-esque setup.
“Trapped in endless civil war, ‘the man who has two minds’ tortures and is tortured as he tries to meld the halves of his country and of himself. Viet Thanh Nguyen accomplishes this integration in a magnificent feat of storytelling. *The Sympathizer* is a novel of literary, historical, and political importance.” —Maxine Hong Kingston, author of *The Woman Warrior* and *The Fifth Book of Peace*

“Magisterial. A disturbing, fascinating, and darkly comic take on the fall of Saigon and its aftermath and a powerful examination of guilt and betrayal. *The Sympathizer* is destined to become a classic and redefine the way we think about the Vietnam War and what it means to win and to lose.” —T. C. Boyle

**Viet Thanh Nguyen** was born in Vietnam and raised in America. His stories have appeared in *Best New American Voices, TriQuarterly, Narrative*, and the *Chicago Tribune* and he is the author of the academic book *Race and Resistance*. He teaches English and American Studies at the University of Southern California and lives in Los Angeles.