



The Loft Literary Center
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The Loft Literary Center Announces 2013 McKnight Artist Fellowships for Writers

**Four Minnesota Prose Writers and One Children's Author
Receive \$25,000 Each**

The Loft Literary Center is pleased to announce the winners of the 2013 McKnight Artist Fellowships for Writers, Loft Awards in Creative Prose and Loft Award in Children's Literature (Older Children). The fellowships are judged by prominent American authors and editors, and the winners, all from Minnesota, are awarded \$25,000 each.

This year's recipients are poets Matthew Batt, Eric Braun, Susan Koefod, and Kao Kalia Yang. The recipient in Children's Literature is Anne Ursu of Minneapolis.

McKnight Artist Fellowships for Writers, Loft Awards in Creative Prose: 2013 Winners

Matthew Batt is the author of *Sugarhouse*, a memoir about buying and renovating a crack house and his life along with it. He's finishing up *The Enthusiast*, a collection of obsessive essays on compulsive subjects, and has begun work on a novel as well. His fiction, nonfiction, and reviews have appeared in *Tin House*, *The Huffington Post*, *Cimarron Review*, *Mid-American Review*, and elsewhere, and he was the 2010 recipient of an Individual Artist Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. He lives with his wife and son in Saint Paul and teaches English and creative writing at the University of St. Thomas.

Eric Braun's short stories have appeared in *Third Coast Review*, *Elysian Fields Review*, and elsewhere. His story, "Men with Boxes," won *Minnesota Monthly's* Tamarack Award in 2007. He is a past mentor participant in the Loft Mentor Series, a recipient of a 2013 Minnesota State Arts Board Artist Initiative Grant, and a convincing air-guitarist. Eric lives in Minneapolis with his wife and two sons.

Susan Koefod is the author of the Arvo Thorson mystery series. Her debut, *Washed Up*, was praised for its "gorgeous prose" by *Library Journal*. Other books in the series include *Broken Down* (2012) and *Burnt Out*, scheduled for publication this fall. She has also widely published prose and poetry, including the first chapter of her literary fiction novel, *Albert Park: a Memoir in Lies*, which appeared in *Turtle Quarterly*. Other works have appeared in *Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine*, *Revolver*, *Talking Stick*, *The Saint Paul Almanac*, *Minnetonka Review*, *Midway Journal*, *Tattoo Highway*, *Lief Magazine*, and other online and print literary journals. She holds an MFA from Hamline University.

Kao Kalia Yang, author of *The Latehomecomer*, is the co-founder of a company dedicated to helping immigrants with writing, translating, and business services. A graduate of Carleton College and Columbia University, Yang also co-hosts a weekly radio program focusing on the Hmong community and has recently released *The Place Where We Were Born*, a film documenting the experiences of Hmong American refugees.

Honorable mentions went to **Pallavi Dixit** and **Jonathan Odell** of Minneapolis and **Katie Hae Leo** and **Yuko Taniguchi** of Rochester.

THE JUDGE

Luis J. Rodriguez has emerged as one of the leading Chicano writers in the country with fifteen published books in memoir, fiction, nonfiction, children's literature, and poetry. Luis' poetry has won a Poetry Center Book Award, a PEN Josephine Miles Literary Award, and a Paterson Poetry Book Prize, among others. His children's books—*America is Her Name* and *It Doesn't Have to be This Way: A Barrio Story*—have won a Patterson Young Adult Book Award, two Skipping Stones Honor Awards, and a Parent's Choice Book Award. He is also the author of a short story collection, *The Republic of East L.A.*, a novel, *Music of the Mill*, and a poetry collection, *My Nature is Hunger: New & Selected Poems*.

Luis is best known for the 1993 memoir of gang life, *Always Running: La Vida Loca, Gang Days in L.A.* Now selling more than 400,000 copies, this book garnered a Carl Sandburg Literary Award, a Chicago Sun-Times Book Award, and was designated a New York Times Notable Book. Written as a cautionary tale for Luis' then 15-year-old son Ramiro—who had joined a Chicago gang—the memoir is popular among youth and teachers. One Los Angeles Public Library official said *Always Running* is the most checked out book in their vast library system—and also the most "stolen." Despite its popularity, the American Library Association called *Always Running* one of the 100 most censored books in the United States

His latest book was the long-awaited sequel to *Always Running*, entitled *It Calls You Back: An Odyssey Through Love, Addiction, Revolutions, and Healing*.

McKnight Artist Fellowships for Writers, Loft Award in Children's Literature/Older Children: The Winner

Anne Ursu's most recent book *Breadcrumbs* was acclaimed as one of the best books of 2012 by The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, School Library Journal, Publishers Weekly, and Amazon.com, as well as an NPR Backseat Book Club featured selection. Her other books include the *Cronus Chronicles* trilogy and two novels for adults, and the forthcoming *The Real Boy*. Anne teaches at Hamline University's MFA in Writing for Children and Young Adults, and she lives in Minneapolis with her son and three cats.

Honorable mentions went to **William Alexander** of Minneapolis, **Brian Farrey-Latz** of Saint Paul, and **Lynne Jonell** of Plymouth.

THE JUDGE

Donna Bray is co-publisher of Balzer & Bray, an imprint of HarperCollins. Donna Bray started her career at Henry Holt and Company, and prior to the launch of Balzer & Bray, was the editorial director of Hyperion Books for Children. Among the books that Donna has edited are the Newbery Medal selected *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* by Avi; National Book Award Finalist *The Birchbark House* by Louise Erdrich; the New York Times bestsellers *Clementine* by Sara Pennypacker and Marla Frazee; *I'd Tell You I Love You But I'd Have to Kill You* by Ally Carter; *We Are the Ship* by Kadir Nelson; and *Grace for President* by Kelly DiPucchio and LeUyen Pham. Donna also launched the blockbuster Baby Einstein book publishing program at Hyperion.

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Incorporated in 1975, The Loft Literary Center is one of the nation's leading independent literary centers. The Loft advances the artistic development of writers, fosters a thriving literary community, and inspires a passion for literature.