



**The Loft Literary Center**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **The Loft Literary Center Announces Recipients of the 2025 McKnight Fellowships for Writers**

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

The Loft Literary Center is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2025 McKnight Fellowships for Writers, Loft Awards in Creative Prose and Loft Award in Children's Literature (Older Children). Since 1982, the Loft has partnered with the McKnight Foundation to offer substantial fellowships to Minnesota writers.

The fellowships are judged by prominent American authors and editors, and the winners, all from Minnesota, are awarded \$25,000 each. The judges this year were Valeria Luiselli in creative prose and Christine Day in children's literature.

The Loft received 38 qualified applications in children's literature and 86 qualified applications in creative prose. This year's recipients are children's writer **Ty Chapman** (Minneapolis) and creative prose writers **Jessica Roeder** (Duluth), **Tracy Ross** (Mankato), **Kathryn Savage** (Minneapolis), and **Sun Yung Shin** (Minneapolis).

The honorable mentions in children's literature are Alison McGhee (Minneapolis), Cristina Oxta (Savage), Vanessa Ramos (Woodbury), and Jackie Lea Sommers (Minneapolis). The honorable mentions in creative prose are Carolyn Holbrook



(Saint Paul), Thomas Kevin O'Rourke (Minneapolis), Chris Stedman (Minneapolis), and Natalie Vestin (Saint Paul).

## **McKnight Fellowships for Writers, Loft Award in Children's Literature/Middle Grade and Young Adult: 2025 Recipient**

**Ty Chapman** is an author and poet based in Minnesota. He is the author of four children's books and the poetry collection, *Tartarus*. Additionally, he co-edited the poetry anthology, *All Power to the People*, with his friend and collaborator, Ari Tison. He has published poems through The Academy of American Poets, *Water~Stone*, and more. Ty has received fellowships from Cave Canem, The Center for Arts + Social Justice, and The Loft Literary Center. He holds an MFA in writing for children and young adults through Vermont College of Fine Arts. When he isn't writing his next poetry collection or middle grade fantasy novel, he spends his time playing basketball and reading in the sun.

## **McKnight Fellowships for Writers, Loft Award in Creative Prose: 2025 Recipients**

**Jessica Roeder** (she/her) was born in Chicago and lives in Duluth, Minnesota, where she teaches writing online and dance in person. She also works as a copy editor and proofreader for literary presses. Her stories, poems, and essays have appeared in magazines including *Kenyon Review*, *Threepenny Review*, *American Poetry Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Third Coast*, and *AGNI*. *Staircases Will Outnumber Us*, a prose chapbook, was published in 2017 by Red Bird. She has been honored with a Pushcart Prize, a Minnesota State Arts Board grant, and a McKnight Artist Fellowship.

**Tracy Ross** is a poet and writer. She has published four books of poetry, most recently *When Lightning Strikes—Nikola's Dove* (2023) about the life, genius, and neurodivergence of Nikola Tesla. She is also the author of *Binary Logic* (short stories) and *Certainty of One—A Tale of Education Automation* (dystopia memoir). She has been published in *Memoir Magazine*, *Wayne Literary Review*, *Still Points Arts Quarterly*, *34th Parallel*, *Sublunary Review*, *The Journal of Poetry Therapy*, and *Author Magazine*. Ross holds a B.A. from Roosevelt University in Chicago and a Master's in Education from Bemidji State. She is an alum of the MFA Creative Writing program



at Augsburg University where she also teaches writing and research to undergraduates. You may learn more about her and her work at <https://www.rosspoet.org>

**Kathryn Savage's** *Groundglass: An Essay* (Coffee House Press), explores topics of environmental justice and links between pollution and public health. *Groundglass* was named a best read of the year by the *Sydney Morning Herald*, a *Yale Review* Favorite Cultural Artifact, and was showcased in *Orion Magazine*, *Lit Hub*, and selected by *EcoLit Books* as a Best Environmental Book of 2022. Other writing has recently appeared in *Ecotone*, *Guernica*, *VQR*, and she is a frequent book review contributor to *World Literature Today*. Her work has been supported by the Minnesota State Arts Board, Jerome Foundation, and Tulsa Artist Fellowship. Savage is an assistant professor of creative writing at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. She is writing a novel.

**Sun Yung Shin** is an award-winning Korean-born writer living in Minneapolis on Dakota and indigenous homelands. Her forthcoming prose book, *Heart Eater: A Memoir of Immigration, Belonging, and How We Find Ourselves in Language*, will be published in May 2026. She is the author, co-author, or editor of thirteen books including the popular anthology *A Good Time for the Truth: Race in Minnesota*, the Carter G. Woodson award-winning picture book *Where We Come From*, and five books of poetry. She is a former Bush Fellow and MacDowell Fellow, and teaches creative writing with the Minnesota Prison Writing Workshop and elsewhere. With poet Su Hwang, she is the co-founder of Poetry Asylum and also frequently collaborates with visual artists, musicians, and community activists. More at [sunyungshin.com](http://sunyungshin.com)

## **McKnight Award Judging**

McKnight Award judges were selected in the fall of 2024. The identities of the judges are not known to the applicants during the application process, and applicant identities are kept confidential from the judges until they make their selections.

## **2025 Children's Literature Judge**



**Christine Day** is a citizen of the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe. Her first novel, *I Can Make This Promise*, was a best book of the year from NPR, as well as a Charlotte Huck Award Honor Book, and an American Indian Youth Literature Award Honor Book. Her second novel, *The Sea in Winter*, was a Top 10 Indie Kids' Next selection, a finalist for the Pacific Northwest Book Award, and an American Indian Youth Literature Award Honor Book. She also wrote *She Persisted: Maria Tallchief*, a biography in Chelsea Clinton's book series about inspirational women.

Her most recent book, *We Still Belong*, was an American Indian Youth Literature Award Winner, as well as a Junior Library Guild selection. In this warm hug of a novel, award-winning author Christine Day assures readers that even with all the very real problems they may face, they are worthy, their voices matter—and they belong.

## 2025 Creative Prose Judge

**Valeria Luiselli** was born in Mexico City and grew up in South Korea, South Africa, and India. An acclaimed writer of both fiction and nonfiction, she is the author of the essay collections *Sidewalks* and *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in Forty Questions*, and the novels *Faces in the Crowd*, *The Story of My Teeth*; and, most recently, *Lost Children Archive*. Called “daring, wholly original, brilliant. . .fascinating” (NPR), *Lost Children Archive* re-imagines the classic road trip novel as an urgent examination of the immigration crisis of the US Southern Border. She is the recipient of a 2019 Macarthur “Genius Grant” and her works have been recognized by the National Book Critics Circle, The National Book Foundation, *The New York Times*, NPR, *The Guardian*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *BuzzFeed*, *Huffington Post*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, among others. She is a writer in residence at Bard College in New York.

## About the McKnight Fellowships for Writers

Now in its 44th year, the McKnight Fellowships for Writers provide Minnesota writers of demonstrated ability with an opportunity to work on their writing for a concentrated period of time. Five \$25,000 fellowships are awarded. One Award in Children's Literature alternates annually between writers for children under the age of eight and writers for older readers. Four fellowships alternate annually between writers of poetry/spoken word poetry and writers of creative prose. Writers must



have either published a book in the genre in which they are applying, have been featured as a performer for a significant amount of readings and performances, or have a significant number of publications in literary magazines. The McKnight Fellowships for Writers administered by the Loft are supported by the McKnight Foundation.

Previous McKnight recipients are too numerous to list, but they include Heid E. Erdrich, Taiyon Coleman, Robert Bly, Patricia Hampl, Margaret Hasse, Jim Moore, Sun Yung Shin, Cary Waterman, Sandra Benitez, Deborah Keenan, Jack El-Hai, Leslie Adrienne Miller, Patricia Weaver Francisco, Barrie Jean Borich, Lorna Landvik, Kate DiCamillo, Molly Beth Griffin, Danez Smith, Kelly Barnhill, Ray Gonzalez, Dobby Gibson, Donte Collins, Heather Bouwman, Khary Jackson, David Mura, Shannon Gibney, and Anne Ursu.

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*Started in 1974, The Loft Literary Center is one of the nation's leading independent literary centers. The Loft advances the power of writers and readers to craft and share stories, to create and celebrate connections, and to build just, life-sustaining communities. Learn more: [loft.org](http://loft.org)*