Panelists

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The top ten books published this month that librarians across the country love.

libraryreads.org
Agenda

- Genre Definition
- History of the genre
- Appeals & Themes
- Awards
- Trends and recent titles
- Books we’re excited about
- Q&A

#NoveListConversations
Dictionary definitions of "literary"

Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary:

1a: of, relating to, or having the characteristics of humane learning or literature
b: bookish
c: of or relating to books
2a: well-read
b: of or relating to authors or scholars or to their professions

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition:

1. Of, relating to, or dealing with literature
2. Of or relating to writers or the profession of literature
3. Versed in or fond of literature or learning.
4a. Appropriate to literature rather than everyday speech or writing.
b. Bookish; pedantic.
Genre definition

Literary fiction:
Genre definition

Literary fiction:

1) focuses on **style, language and character**;
Genre definition

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1) focuses on **style, language and character**;
2) asks readers to pay attention to its construction;
Genre definition

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2) asks readers to pay attention to its construction;

3) and approaches its subjects, regardless of tone, with **serious intent**.
Genre definition

Literary fiction:
1) focuses on **style, language and character**;
2) asks readers to pay attention to its construction;
3) and approaches its subjects, regardless of tone, with **serious intent**.

For *some*, it also demands a certain focus on **realism**.

*The Readers' Advisory Guide to Genre Fiction*, Neal Wyatt and Joyce G. Saricks
Literary fiction “versus” genre fiction
Literary fiction “versus” genre fiction

From: You're All Just Jealous of My Jetpack by Tom Gauld
This genre comes with a lot of baggage
This genre comes with a lot of baggage

- Literary fiction isn't "above" other genres
This genre comes with a lot of baggage

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- Every genre includes good and bad writing
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- Every genre includes good and bad writing
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- A literary hardcover sells for about as much as a hardcover of any other genre (but literary authors earn less on average)
#PublishingPaidMe

• Hashtag started by two Black YA authors Tochi Onyebuchi and L.L. McKinney

• Highlighted huge disparities in what Black authors are paid by publishers compared to non-Black authors

• Jesmyn Ward fought for $100,000 advance after winning National Book Award while white literary fiction author Lydia Kiesling sold her debut novel for $200,000

• Roxane Gay received $15,000 advance for *Bad Feminist*. White author Lacy Johnson received $215,000 for her essay collection, *The Reckonings*.

• Unprecedented three-time Hugo Award Best Novel winner N.K. Jemisin received $60,000 for *The City We Became*. Emily St. John Mandel received $800,000 for only the US rights to *The Glass Hotel*.
(Pre-)History of the genre
History of the genre

1970

1974

1981

1984
Literary Fiction: What’s the appeal?

**Appeals**
- Lyrical
- Complex (style and character)

**Popular narrative structures, themes**
- Epistolary novels
- Parallel narratives
- Family sagas
- Strong sense of place
- Immigrant experiences

Photo by [Kourosh Qaffari](https://unsplash.com) on Unsplash
Lyrical

#NoveListConversations
Stylistically complex
Complex character
Ensemble casts
Family gatherings/Family sagas
Suburban malaise

#NoveListConversations
Immigrant experiences

- *A Particular Kind of Black Man* by Tope Folarin
- *Afterlife* by Julia Alvarez
- *The Leavers* by Lisa Ko
- *The Other Americans* by Laila Lalami

#NoveListConversations
Awards

- National Book Awards
- Pulitzer Prize for Fiction
- The Booker Prize
- Nobel Prize for Literature
- Women's Prize for Fiction
- PEN America Literary Awards
Awards committees in the news

- Nobel Prize for Literature
- National Book Critics Circle – resignations over planned Black Lives Matter statement

Awards: Lesser Known Gems

- BCALA, Hurston/Wright Legacy Awards
- Lambda Literary Awards, Stonewall Awards
- Women’s Prize for Fiction
- Carnegie Awards / RUSA Awards
- PEN American Literary Awards, PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction
- Goldsmiths
- Booker International, Best Translated Book Awards (Three Percent)
- First Novel Prize, The Story Prize
- Neustadt International Prize, Dayton Literary Peace Prize (fiction), Aspen Words Literary Prize
Finding diverse and #OwnVoices titles in NoveList!

“[A]uthors of own voices stories draw on their personal experiences as part of a marginalized group to depict their fictional characters’ journeys,” and this may provide “welcome reassurance to readers... unaccustomed to seeing people like themselves at the [narrative] center... or of seeing aspects of their own lives depicted with authenticity and nuance.” ~ Gillian Speace, NoveList
Trends & Current Titles

#NoveListConversations

Photo by Nick Fewings on Unsplash
Humor & Satire

THE SELLOUT
A Novel
PAUL BEATTY

SEVERANCE
Ling Ma

New Waves
A Novel
Kevin Nguyen

MY YEAR OF REST AND RELAXATION
OTTESSA MOSHFEGH

WE CAST A SHADOW
MAURICE CARLOS RUFFIN

#NoveListConversations
Experimental
Unusual forms (AP Unconventional)
Facing Sexism / #MeToo

- An Untamed State
  - Roxane Gay

- Women Talking
  - Miriam Toews

- International Bestseller
  - Kim Jiyoung, Born 1982
  - Cho Nam-Joo

- His Favorites
  - Kate Walbert

#NoveListConversations
Facing Racism

#NoveListConversations
Dealing with Mental Illness / Disability

- *Freshwater* by Akwaeke Emezi
- *The Years, Months, Days* by Yan Lianke
- *Imagine Me Gone* by Adam Haslett
Life During Wartime
Books About Books (and Writers)
Translations

Frankenstein in Baghdad
By Ahmed Saadawi

The Vegetarian
By Han Kang

Flights
By Olga Tokarczuk

Hurricane Season
By Fernanda Melchor

Translated from Spanish by Sophie Hughes

#NoveListConversations
Magical Realism

#NoveListConversations
Short stories

- Friday Black by Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah
- Heads of the Colored People by Nafissa Thompson-Spires
- How to Love a Jamaican by Alexia Arthurs
- Crooked Hallelujah by Kelli Jo Ford

#NoveListConversations
TV series adaptations
Helping readers

- Seriousness
- Character, Language, Style, Construction
- "Well-written"
- Unlikeable characters
- "New" classics
Finding literary fiction with mainstream appeal

- LibraryReads list
- Oprah Book Club
- Today Show Book Club
Nonfiction

Biography/Memoir

Essays

Social Issues

#NoveListConversations
Poetry

- Citizen Illegal by José Olivarez
- An American Sunrise by Joy Harjo
- Homie by Danez Smith

#NoveListConversations
Literary genre blends

Historical Literary Fiction

Fantasy

Mythological
Literary genre blends

- Historical Thriller
- Magical Realism
- Science Fiction

#NoveListConversations
Literary Fiction Starter Pack

Representative of genre
Well-reviewed
Wide appeal
Stand-alone
On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous
by Ocean Vuong (2019)

- Immigrant experiences
- LGBTQIA diverse
- Own voices
- Unconventional
- Haunting
- Lyrical

#NoveListConversations
Exit West
by Mohsin Hamid (2017)

- Immigrant experiences
- Life during wartime
- Love in wartime
- Character driven
- Own Voices
- Bittersweet
There There
by Tommy Orange (2018)

- Multiple perspectives
- Ensemble cast
- Character driven
- Own Voices
- Fast-paced
- Strong sense of place
The Vanishing Half
by Brit Bennett

• Character driven
• Own voices
• Engaging
• Stylistically complex
Sabrina & Corina
by Kali Fajardo-Anstine (2019)

• Debut short story collection
• Female relationships
• Own voices – Latina protagonists of indigenous descent
• Hopeful
• Strong sense of place
• Compelling
Books we’re excited about!

Photo by Clay Banks on Unsplash
Books Jessica can't wait to read

Luster
Raven Leilani

Real Life
Brandon Taylor

Earthlings
Sayaka Murata

The Death of Oji
Akwaeke Emezi

Transcendent Kingdom
Yaa Gyasi

#NoveListConversations
Books Stephen can’t wait to read
Let’s Talk! Q&A

Stephen Sposato
Manager of Content Curation, Chicago Public Library

Jessica Lin
Customer Engagement Specialist, NoveList

#NoveListConversations
Thank you

Learn more at

ebscohost.com/novelist & libraryreads.org
Finding Literary Fiction in NoveList