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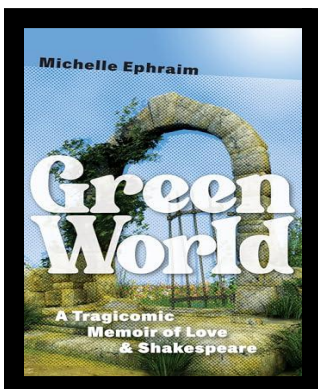
Wisconsin Library Association Announces 2025 Literary Award Recipients

(Madison, Wisconsin) The Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) has announced its literary, notable authors and outstanding achievement awards for 2025.

Literary Awards

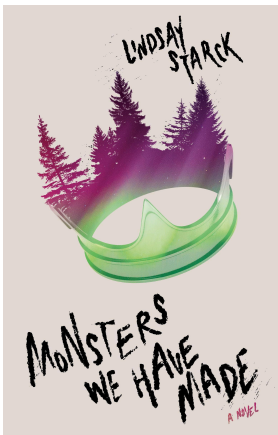
The WLA Literary Awards are for the highest literary achievements in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry by an author with a Wisconsin connection, for a work written in the previous year. This year's recipients are:

WLA Literary Award for Nonfiction: Michelle Ephraim for *Green World*



At twenty-three, Michelle Ephraim was failing at everything. The only child of reclusive Holocaust-survivor parents who were dismayed by her literary studies, she found herself dumped by her boyfriend and failing out of graduate school. Then, one night, she crashed a Shakespeare recitation party. Loopy from vodka and never having read a single line of Shakespeare, she was transfixed. Shakespeare, she decided, was the lifeline she needed. *Green World* is the hilarious and heartbreaking story of Ephraim's quest to become a Shakespeare scholar and to find community and home. As she studies Shakespeare, Ephraim's world uncannily begins to mirror the story of the Jewish daughter in *The Merchant of Venice*, and she finds herself in a Green World, an idyllic place where Shakespeare's heroines escape their family trauma. *Green World* reckons with global, historical, and personal tragedy and shows how literature—comic and tragic—can help us brave every kind of anguish.

WLA Literary Award for Fiction: Lindsay Starck for *Monsters We Have Made*



A poignant and evocative novel that explores the bounds of familial love, the high stakes of parenthood, and the tenuous divide between fiction and reality. Ten years ago, Sylvia Gray's young daughter, Faye, attacked her babysitter in order to impress the Kingman, a monster she and her best friend had encountered on the Internet. When the now twenty-one-year-old Faye goes missing, leaving her toddler behind, Sylvia launches a search that propels her back into the past and back into the Kingman's orbit. With the help of her estranged husband, her estranged sister, and a charismatic professor, Sylvia draws dangerously closer not only to Faye, but also to the truth about the monster that once inspired her. Will Sylvia be able to reach her daughter before history repeats itself? Or will it be Sylvia, this time, who loses her grip on reality and succumbs to the dark powers of this monstrous figure? Both literary and suspenseful, *Monsters We Have Made* confronts the terrors of parenthood and examines the boundaries of love. Most importantly, it reminds us of the power of stories to shape our lives.

WLA Literary Award for Poetry: Alison Thumel for *Architect*



"When he died, my brother became the architect of the rest of my life," writes Alison Thumel in *Architect*, which interweaves poems, lyric essays, and visual art to great emotional effect. In this debut collection, the buildings of Frank Lloyd Wright become a blueprint for elegy, as Thumel overlays the language of architecture with the language of grief to raze and reconstruct memories, metaphors, and myths. With obsessive and exacting focus, the poet leads us through room after room in a search to answer whether it is possible to rebuild in the wake of loss. Meanwhile, the midwestern landscape beyond these rooms—the same landscape that infuses the low, horizontal forms of Wright's Prairie Style buildings—shapes the figures in *Architect* as well as their fates: "For years after my brother's death, I collected news articles on people who died young and tragically in landlocked states. Prairie Style deaths—boys sucked down into grain silos or swept up by tornadoes or fallen through a frozen pond. The boys I didn't know, but the landscape I did. The dread of it. How many miles you can look ahead. For how long you see what is coming."

Notable Wisconsin Authors

The Notable Wisconsin Authors Award honors Wisconsin authors, past and present, for their literary contributions. WLA hopes to promote a greater awareness of the state's literary heritage through this recognition. This year's recipients are authors Jacquelyn Mitchard, Patrick Rothfuss and Robin Wall Kimmerer.

Jacquelyn Mitchard is the author of *The Deep End of the Ocean*, which won the First Novel Award from the National Book Awards. She has written over a dozen novels, including *Cage of Stars*, *The Breakdown Lane*, and *The Most Wanted*, as well as acclaimed nonfiction works such as *The Same Sweet Girls*. Mitchard's writing, celebrated for its emotional depth and richly drawn characters, has earned numerous honors, including the Book Sense Pick, the Michigan Notable Book Award, and recognition from the American Library Association. Her stories often explore themes of family, resilience, and community, reflecting the values of her Wisconsin roots. Learn more about Mitchard at <https://jacquelynmitchard.com/>

Patrick Rothfuss is a bestselling American fantasy author from Madison, Wisconsin, best known for *The Name of the Wind* and its sequels in *The Kingkiller Chronicle* series. His work has been praised for its rich world-building, lyrical prose, and complex characters, earning him accolades such as the Quill Award and the Alex Award. A lifelong Wisconsinite, Rothfuss remains connected to his home state while captivating readers worldwide with his storytelling. Learn more about Rothfuss at <https://patrickrothfuss.com/>

Robin Wall Kimmerer is a botanist, professor, and author from Wisconsin, best known for her acclaimed book *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. A member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, Kimmerer blends Indigenous knowledge with scientific expertise, exploring themes of ecology, gratitude, and our relationship with the natural world. She teaches at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where her work continues to inspire readers and students alike. Learn more about Wall Kimmerer at <https://www.robinwallkimmerer.com/>

Outstanding Achievement

In addition, the following Wisconsin authors were recognized for outstanding achievement for books published in the previous year.

2025 Honored Fiction Authors

- *Familiaris* by David Wroblewski
- *Northwoods* by Amy Pease
- *Home Is Where the Bodies Are* by Jeneva Rose
- *Muddled Cherries* by Sally Collins

2025 Honored Nonfiction Titles

- *Wisconsin for Kennedy* by B.J. Hollars
- *A Year of Plenty* by B.J. Hollars
- *Insect Epiphany* by Barrett Klein
- *Impermanence* by Sue Leaf

2025 Honored Poetry Titles

- *2000 Blacks* by Ajibola Tolase
- *Winter Here* by Jessica Tanck
- *Exploding Head* by Cynthia Marie Hoffman
- *Praying to the God of Small Things* by Catherine Jagoe

For more information about the WLA Literary Awards and a list of past recipients, please visit <https://www.wisconsinlibraries.org/wla-literary-awards>

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About the Wisconsin Library Association

The Wisconsin Library Association is a professional organization representing all types of libraries – school, public, academic, and special. Its membership comprises nearly 1,400 librarians and support staff, library trustees, friends of libraries, and business vendors who advocate and work for the improvement of library services for all Wisconsin citizens. For more information, visit www.wisconsinlibraries.org.