



## LIBRARY OF VIRGINIA

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **September book events at the Library of Virginia feature blues musician Phil Wiggins, historians Scott Reynolds Nelson and Carolyn Eastman, and speculative fiction series author Lucinda Roy**

**RICHMOND, VIRGINIA** – The Piedmont blues scene, the role of wheat in toppling empires, the country’s first (and forgotten) celebrity and a speculative fiction series about a future “Disunited States” are the topics of author talks at the Library of Virginia in September.

All events are free, but require registration. Limited free parking for events is available in the Library’s parking garage accessed via entrances on 8th and 9th Streets.

**Thursday, Sept. 15, 2022** | 12:00–1:30 p.m. | Library of Virginia Conference Rooms

#### **BOOK TALK WITH CAROLYN EASTMAN**

#### ***The Strange Genius of Mr. O: The World of the United States' First Forgotten Celebrity***

Register at [lva-virginia.libcal.com/event/9354155](https://lva-virginia.libcal.com/event/9354155)

Virginia Commonwealth University history professor and prize-winning author Carolyn Eastman discusses her new book, *The Strange Genius of Mr. O: The World of the United States' First Forgotten Celebrity*. Why should we care about a now-forgotten celebrity of the early 19th century? This talk examines an explosive celebrity performer who captivated audiences at a key moment in the founding era—a man whose career featured many of the hallmarks of celebrity we recognize from later eras: glamorous friends, eccentric clothing, scandalous religious views and even a drug habit. And yet examining his career and the Americans who loved (or hated) him reveals a vivid portrait of the United States in the midst of invention. A book signing will follow the talk.

**Thursday, Sept. 22, 2022** | 6:00–7:30 p.m. | Library of Virginia Lecture Hall (and livestreamed)

#### **WEINSTEIN AUTHOR SERIES TALK WITH SCOTT REYNOLDS NELSON**

#### ***Oceans of Grain: How American Wheat Remade the World***

Register at [lva-virginia.libcal.com/event/9271532](https://lva-virginia.libcal.com/event/9271532)

University of Georgia history professor and award-winning author Scott Reynolds Nelson discusses his latest book, *Oceans of Grain: How American Wheat Remade the World*, a revelatory global history that shows how cheap American grain toppled the world’s largest empires. Nelson compares the conflicts over western American expansion in the Civil War to conflict over Russian expansion into the Black Sea. A book signing will follow the talk. This in-person event will also be livestreamed on the Library’s [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) pages at the time of the event.

The [Carole Weinstein Author Series](#) supports the literary arts by bringing both new and well-known authors to the Library of Virginia through online or in-person events. Free and open to the public, the series focuses on Virginia authors and Virginia subjects across all genres.

Friday, Sept. 23, 2022 | 11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. | Library of Virginia Orientation Room

### BOOK BREAK WITH LUCINDA ROY

#### The Dreambird Chronicles series: *The Freedom Race* and *Flying the Coop*

Register at [lva-virginia.libcal.com/event/8965299](http://lva-virginia.libcal.com/event/8965299)

Take a weekday book break at the Library of Virginia with novelist, poet and memoirist Lucinda Roy, who discusses the works in her Dreambird Chronicles series: *The Freedom Race* and its sequel, *Flying the Coop*. Roy's explosive first foray into speculative fiction takes place in a near-future United States where white people once again enslave African Americans. In the disunited states, no person of color—especially not a girl whose body reimagines flight—is safe. Roy has created a terrifying glimpse of what might be and tempered it with strength and hope.

Presented by the [Virginia Shop](#) at the Library of Virginia, the Book Break series offers the opportunity to connect book lovers to new titles and local authors.

Friday, Sept. 23, 2022 | 5:15–7:30 p.m. | Library of Virginia Lecture Hall

### BOOK & MUSIC EVENT

#### *Sweet Bitter Blues: A Conversation with Authors Phil Wiggins & Frank Matheis*

Register at [lva-virginia.libcal.com/event/9239442](http://lva-virginia.libcal.com/event/9239442)

The Library hosts musician Phil Wiggins and his co-author Frank Matheis in a conversation about *Sweet Bitter Blues*, a compelling and personal narrative about the Piedmont blues scene in the Washington, D.C., area. Many of the region's best-known traditional bluesmen and women had deep roots in Virginia, including Flora Molton, Archie Edwards and Wiggins's long-time musical partner, John Cephas. Audience members will also be treated to a performance of Piedmont blues by Wiggins, a widely acknowledged master of the Piedmont style and a blues harmonica legend. A reception opens this evening at 5:15 p.m., followed by the program at 6:00 p.m. and a book signing at 7:15 p.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2022 | 6:00–7:30 p.m. | Livestreamed on Facebook & YouTube

### VIRTUAL FICTION DISCUSSION PANEL

#### Library of Virginia Literary Awards Fiction Finalists

In the lead up to the [Library of Virginia Literary Awards](#) on Oct. 15, author Brian Castleberry will moderate a virtual discussion with fiction award finalists Jocelyn Nicole Johnson, Joanna Pearson and Sheri Reynolds. The discussions continue on Oct. 6 (Poetry Discussion Panel) and Oct. 12 (Nonfiction Discussion Panel). The events will be accessible through the Library's [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) pages.

### About the Library of Virginia

The Library of Virginia is one of the oldest agencies of Virginia government, founded in 1823 to preserve and provide access to the state's incomparable printed and manuscript holdings. Its collection, which has grown steadily through the years, is the most comprehensive resource in the world for the study of Virginia history, culture and government with over 130 million items in the collections. The Library also engages the public through in-person and virtual events, education programs and online resources that reach nearly 4 million individuals each year throughout the commonwealth and beyond. The Library of Virginia is located near Capitol Square in downtown Richmond at 800 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219. Learn more at [www.lva.virginia.gov](http://www.lva.virginia.gov).

### About the Library of Virginia Foundation

Founded in 1984, the Library of Virginia Foundation supports the Library of Virginia and its mission by raising private financial support, managing its endowment and overseeing programming that brings Virginia's history and culture to life.