



Kentucky Humanities announced Kentucky Reads, a statewide literacy initiative centering on the novel *Birds of Opulence* by Kentucky author Crystal Wilkinson. As part of this initiative, Kentucky Humanities is making available 25 book discussion programs to be held throughout Kentucky using *Birds of Opulence*. We have assembled an impressive group of scholars who will lead thoughtful and insightful discussions about the themes in the book.

The booking fee for any non-profit organization is \$50 and each organization that books a *Birds of Opulence* book discussion will be provided with 15 copies of the novel to share among participating members, publicity materials to promote your discussion, and expenses paid to the discussion leader (including an honorarium and travel expenses.)

Any non-profit organization in Kentucky can host this program, including libraries, historical societies, churches, prisons, veterans' groups, museums, book clubs, etc. These programs will be awarded on a first-come first-served basis and must take place between February 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021.

How It Works

1. Decide your organization would like to host a book discussion of *Birds of Opulence*.
2. Select who will serve as your scholar to lead a discussion about the book and relevant topics.
3. Contact the scholar and set a date, time, and location for your group discussion and discuss any special arrangements. Determine if this event will be in-person or virtual and discuss this with the scholar.
4. Book the program using the online booking form at least six weeks in advance and pay the \$50 booking fee.
5. Kentucky Humanities will send you an agreement to sign and return.
6. Kentucky Humanities will send 10 flyers, 50 postcards, and 15 copies of *Birds of Opulence* to promote your event.
7. Publicize your book discussion once it has been approved using the supplied materials.
8. Host your discussion and have participants complete the provided evaluation forms.
9. Complete the online host report.
10. Return evaluation forms to Kentucky Humanities within 2 weeks of your program taking place.

Scholars Available

- **Brian Clardy**, bclardy@murraystate.edu, (270) 226-5064, **Murray, KY**. Brian is a history professor at Murray State University and a board member of Kentucky Humanities.
- **Elizabeth Glass**, ELizabeth.L.Glass@gmail.com, (502) 552-0088, **Louisville, KY**. Elizabeth is a PhD Candidate in Humanities at the University of Louisville where she is an Appalachian Studies scholar and creative writer. She has received an Emerging Artist Award in Nonfiction from the Kentucky Arts Council and a grant from the Kentucky Foundation for Women. Her writing has appeared in publications such as Redivider, River Teeth's "Beautiful Things" series, and Appalachian Heritage, and she has presented on *Birds of Opulence* at conferences throughout the country.
- **DaMaris Hill**, damaris.hill@uky.edu, (859) 903-5597, **Lexington, KY**. DaMaris is the author of *A Bound Woman Is a Dangerous Thing: The Incarceration of African American Women from Harriet Tubman to Sandra Bland*, *The Fluid Boundaries of Suffrage and Jim Crow: Staking Claims in the American Heartland*, *Visible Textures*. Similar to her creative process, Hill's scholarly research is interdisciplinary. Hill is an Associate Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Kentucky.
- **Mauri E. Systo**, mauri.systo@uky.edu, (202) 906-9000, **Marion, KY**. Mauri is a University of Kentucky alumni who earned her PhD in Anthropology. Her research is conducted in the Southeast US and Southern Appalachia, with a focus on economic justice, labor, and social inequalities.
- **Jayne Waldrop**, jaynemoorewaldrop@gmail.com, (859) 494-8262, **Lexington, KY**. Jayne is a writer, attorney and author of *Retracing My Steps*, a finalist in the New Women's Voices Chapbook Competition (Finishing Line Press 2019). She has two books forthcoming in 2021, a linked story collection, *Drowned Town* (University Press of Kentucky) and a poetry collection, *Pandemic Lent: A Season in Poetry* (Finishing Line Press). She's a former book columnist for the Louisville Courier-Journal and literary liaison at the Carnegie Center of Literacy and Learning in Lexington.
- **Marianne Worthington**, worthington.marianne@gmail.com, (606) 521-7115, **Williamsburg, KY**. Marianne is a poet, editor, and educator living in southeastern Kentucky. She co-founded the online literary magazine *Still: The Journal* in 2009 and serves as its poetry editor. She wrote the "Afterword" for the republication of Crystal Wilkinson's *Water Street* (2017) and presented an oral history of Wilkinson for the annual Emory & Henry Literary Festival (2017).

Organizations are not limited to these scholars.