



Association of Writers
& Writing Programs

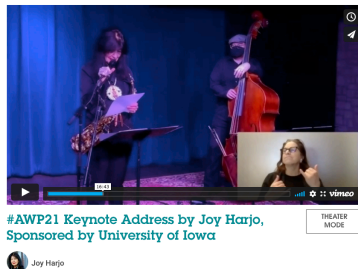
PRESS RELEASE

Association of Writers & Writing Programs
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AWP's completely virtual 2021 Conference & Bookfair (March 3–7) hosted over 6,000 attendees, 250 events, and 300 exhibitors

USA, March 8, 2021 — For the first time ever, the Association of Writers & Writing Programs' annual conference and bookfair took place entirely in the virtual space. The largest literary event in North America featured both live and prerecorded events. Participants were able to chat with each other during the panels, view a directory of attendees, and arrange meetings with old and new friends. Dedicated bookfair hours on Thursday and Friday were followed by a Saturday Community Bookfair featuring small presses, journals, and literary organizations. Live caucuses and discussion groups brought attendees together in real time. The live portion of the conference closed on March 7, but registered attendees will still have access to conference content on demand until April 3. [Registration purchases will remain open through this time.](#)



Keynote speaker Joy Harjo mesmerized and inspired the audience with a blend of poetry and jazz music. Her nine books of poetry include *An American Sunrise*, *Conflict Resolution for Holy Beings*, *How We Became Human: New and Selected Poems*, and *She Had Some Horses*. Harjo's memoir *Crazy Brave* won several awards, including the PEN USA Literary Award for Creative Nonfiction and the American Book Award. Harjo's keynote is available for on-demand viewing for registered attendees.

AWP awarded nearly 100 attendees with free conference registrations this year thanks to many generous donations to the [AWP Community Scholarship Program](#). Additional resources provided during #AWP21 included the Wick Poetry Center at Kent State University presents [Beyond Sunrise: Traveling Stanzas](#), which invited attendees to contribute poems and reflections on our pandemic year. Pen Parentis provided writer-parent resources which included online literary games and popular children's books read aloud by Pen Parentis authors.

Event Highlights:

Disability's Influence on Literature: Realism as a Craft Concept
A Reading & Conversation with Mira Jacobs & Monique Truong
A Reading & Conversation with Jennifer Egan & Yiyun Li

American Harvest & White Flights: Marie Mockett and Jess Row in Conversation
A Reading & Conversation with Edwidge Danticat & Sarah M. Broom on Finding Home
Fierce L.A. Women Write Stories that Change the Paradigm
A Reading & Conversation with Viet Thanh Nguyen and Kristen Millares Young
Tribute to June Jordan

Breakout Event Highlights:

Betrayed: Writing about Family, Friends, and Loved Ones
New Poetry from Graywolf Press
Ask an Agent Anything
Interrogating the Racial Past Through Research-Based Poetry

Here's what attendees had to say:



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<https://twitter.com/debenbach/status/1367195422457008132?s=20>
https://twitter.com/sarah_dstair/status/1368732696009146372?s=20
<https://twitter.com/IsabellaJetten/status/1368684134986612738?s=20>

For a full list of featured events, visit:

https://www.awpwriter.org/awp_conference/presenters_featured_presenters_overview

For those who weren't able to attend all of the conference, this incredible programming will remain available on demand until April 3. The 2021 AWP Conference & Bookfair solidified AWP's entry into and growing presence within the virtual event space. In May of 2020, [AWP launched Virtual AWP](#), year-round programming that includes a Virtual Book Club, Conversations with Writers, and a Virtual Pedagogy series. Future in-person conferences will have a virtual component, and it's safe to say that AWP's digital presence is here to stay.

For additional information, contact the conference department conference@awpwriter.org.

For images, social media content, contact the communications department at awpPR@awpwriter.org.

For additional information read the [Writer's News piece](#).