Media Coverage from our 40th Anniversary Season
**SUNDAY**

**Nick Hornby** Author will give a short reading from his new novel “Just Like You.” Followed by a conversation with novelist and journalist **Vendela Vida**, via inprinthoustontx.org at 6 p.m., virtual/prehallucinating.

**TUESDAY**

**Emma Theriault** Author will be in conversation with **Victoria Araman** to discuss “The Queen’s Council Rebel Broke” via brazosbookstore.com at 7 p.m., virtual.

**Wednesday**

**Ann Burns** Author will discuss “A Song for Lucy” from Dark Times via murderbybook.com.

**Thursday**

**Special Virtual Storytime** Author **Katie Kelly** will read “Norman: One Amazing Goldfish” via Blue Willow’s Facebook Live at 10 a.m., virtual.

**Friday**

**Ryan Ritter** Author will discuss “Crucial Decisions” via Zoom. 7 p.m., brazosbookstore.com.

**Saturday**

**Margaret Atwood** Author will give a short reading from her new poetry collection “Quiddity.” Followed by a conversation with **Melissa Facher** via inprinthoustontx.org at 6 p.m., virtual/prehallucinating.
Inprint’s 40th Margarett Root Brown Reading Series Lineup Just Went from Big to Epic

Kazuo Ishiguro and Jhumpa Lahiri will now join an already-stacked lineup of literary heavyweights.

By Emma Schkloven • 1/5/2021 at 11:45am
THE 2021 (VIRTUAL) EDITION OF INPRINT’S BELOVED ANNUAL READING SERIES WAS ALREADY SLATED TO BE BIG. NOW IT’S JUST MINDBLOWING. Last fall the organization announced the stacked lineup for its 40th Margarett Root Brown Reading Series. And now it’s added two more literary heavyweights to the schedule: Nobel Laureate Kazuo Ishiguro on March 7 and Pulitzer Prize-winner Jhumpa Lahiri on May 10.

“We are extremely excited to add these brilliant, internationally acclaimed authors to what is already an extraordinary season,” Inprint Executive Director Rich Levy said in a statement. “It’s fitting that our 40th anniversary season be filled with an astonishing array of literary experiences, and of the highest technical quality, in the context of the pandemic.”

In Inprint’s “virtual studio,” Ishiguro and Lahiri will read from their new books, Klara and the Sun and Whereabouts, respectively. Season ticket holders will receive admission to the studio and free copies of the books as part of their subscription. General admission tickets will also include a hardcover copy of the book.

Kazuo Ishiguro: 5 p.m. Mar 7. $30, general admission; tickets go on sale Jan 11. Online. Learn more here.

Jhumpa Lahiri: 7 p.m. May 10. $25, general admission; tickets go on sale Mar 8. Online. Learn more here.

Published 11:45 a.m. Sept 7, 2020

WHEN INPRINT CELEBRATES A SPECIAL OCCASION, it goes seriously big. Nothing demonstrates that more than the lineup of internationally celebrated authors the organization is bringing for its Margarett Root Brown Reading Series’ 40th anniversary. It’s a group of talent sure to spark conversations in every corner of the Bayou City and beyond, thanks to a new tweak to the longstanding literary series.
“We wanted the lineup to be reflective of the time we’re in, reflect the issues that we’re all facing,” associate director Krupa Parikh tells Houstonia. “I think there’s a lot in this season that people will find very relevant and moving.”

Although a smaller lineup than in previous years, this seven-event, nine-writer season, which kicks off September 21 and runs through April 2021, features an array of literary heavyweights, including Pulitzer Prize winners Viet Thanh Nguyen, Marilynne Robinson, and Jericho Brown (a former Inprint Fellow, who just so happened to earn his PhD from the University of Houston). Also making appearances are National Medal of Arts recipient Julia Alvarez, Emmy-winning screenwriter and author Nick Hornby, and PEN/Hemingway Award recipient Chang-rae Lee, among others.

In an exciting twist, all of the season’s readings will be presented live via Inprint’s “virtual studio,” so you can satisfy that literary itch whether you’re in Houston or not. If safety allows, the two April readings will also be held in person—some serious icing on this book-themed anniversary cake.

*See this year’s full lineup below. For more information about tickets and each reading, visit inprinthonston.org.*

**Inprint Margarett Root Brown Reading Series | 2020-2021**

**Sept 21:** Yaa Gyasi

**Oct 5:** Marilynne Robinson

**Oct 12:** Julia Alvarez & Sigrid Nunez

**Nov 8:** Nick Hornby

**Feb 22:** Lily King & Chang-rae Lee

**Apr 12:** Viet Thanh Nguyen

**April 26:** Jericho Brown
1. Chang-rae Lee

Novels by Chang-rae Lee require some patience: The new “My Year Abroad” is his first in seven years. But they’re constructed with such care that they always make the wait worthwhile. His latest focuses on a college dropout, Tiller Bardmon, on an overseas adventure, a “twelve and one-half percent Asian” visiting Asia on a wild, life-changing adventure guided by his mentor, a Chinese-American entrepreneur. He’s joined by Lily King, author of “Writers & Lovers” for a virtual reading and discussion.

When: 7 p.m. Feb. 22

Details: $5; inprinthouston.org
If you happen to have all of your essential needs covered at the moment, well, good for you. Below you'll find a short list of the best virtual bets coming up to help you pass the time until we're all that lucky. And soon (hopefully) your fellow Houstonians will get a chance to enjoy them, too, as they'll surely be looking for ways to forget this freezing hell as soon as possible.

On Monday, February 22, at 7 p.m. you can enter the Inprint “virtual studio” to hear from authors Lily King and Chang-rae Lee as part of the 40th anniversary 2020/2021 Inprint Margarett Root Brown Reading Series. Maggie Galehouse, a former Houston Chronicle book editor, will lead both writers in conversation, and both will give readings from their latest books. King will read from Writers & Lovers, a “wonderful, witty, heartfelt novel” about “a distressed young woman finding her way in late 20th century New England.” Lee will read from My Year Abroad, “a travelogue and a coming-of-age tale – and a mafia thriller that also skewers global capitalism.” You can purchase a ticket here for $5, and support your local bookstore by picking up one or both of the books at a discount from Brazos Bookstore.
GET LIT(EARY)

Writer Lily King on Writers and Lovers

We chatted with the author about writing the book she wanted to read in her 20s before her virtual Inprint appearance tonight.

By Ryan Pelt • 2/22/2021 at 10:25am
WRITER LILY KING EXPERIENCED A NIGHTMARE THAT MANY WRITERS FACED LAST YEAR: her new book *Writers & Lovers* hit shelves just two weeks before much of the United States began shutting down under stay-at-home orders.

The novel, King’s fifth, follows current waiter and aspiring writer Casey Peabody as she strives to move from one phase of her life into the next amidst grief, joy, romance, and artistic fulfillment.

King had a launch party for the book, did a handful of in-person events, and then began the process of canceling events as her three-month, on-the-road book tour went fully online instead.

Staying at home for her book tour meant more time with her family for King, something she says she relished. *Writers & Lovers* still found an audience, too—it was Jenna Bush Hager’s March pick for *The Today Show* book club and featured prominently in “best of 2020” year-end lists—but King said that the psychic state readers found themselves in while stuck at home maybe let her get away with a happier ending than usual.

“I feel like I got lucky with the happy ending,” King said. “Not to ruin it for anybody, but I think that because it was at this time, people kind of allowed me a happy ending. I’m not a writer that has a fully happy ending very often, and I feel like I was able to get away with it because people were so eager for that.”

Now, almost a year out from the release of *Writers & Lovers*, King will celebrate its recent paperback release as she headlines the sixth installment of InPrint’s 2020-2021 Margaret Root Brown Reading Series with fellow author Chang-rae Lee. We caught up with King to talk about *Writers & Lovers* before the event.

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**Writers writing about writers writing can feel like a snake eating its own tail—what made you want to tell Casey’s story?**

I really felt that it was the kind of book that I wanted to read in my 20s and 30s when I was just starting out writing. I feel like men write about becoming writers much more than women do. I didn’t feel like I’d read that story before. And personally, I love reading about writers. So I had no sense of taboo. And I’ve kind of been surprised by the question that comes up a lot: How did I dare to write about
Everyone knows you’re not supposed to write about writers. I never got that memo. (Laughs.) I love reading about writers.

It was tricky because I really wanted to write about what it felt like to hold a novel in your head and to have it slowly come out on the page. And yet, I knew that that wasn’t going to be very exciting for readers. So I had to be so careful about how I rendered it, when it came out, and always erring on the side of concision and saying too little rather than saying too much. But I wanted so much to convey how the imagination works, and how it’s always working, particularly when you’re not at your desk. It’s working when you’re not thinking about it, and then suddenly, Ah, that scene! Time brings you something you’ve been working on, even though you weren’t conscious of it. That stuff was important to me.

You’re at a point in your writing career where you’ve experienced success. What was it like for you getting into Casey’s shoes, who’s trying to catch a break?

It was kind of surprisingly easy. I think it takes a long time to catch up with your own life. So much of me still feels like I’m waiting tables and trying to write my first novel. There are a lot of similarities between writing your fifth novel and writing your first novel. It really is just as terrifying. Maybe not just as terrifying, but you don’t feel like you have a road map just because you went somewhere else. Now you have to go somewhere new, and you have to find your way. That was really easy to capture because I’ve done it so many times and have so many doubts with every single book—moments where I swore I was going to quit, and that kind of thing. I have so many dreams that I’m still waiting tables and I’ve forgotten the mushroom soup, and I can’t get into the kitchen to get the silverware. That came back to me. I was worried about writing the waitressing scenes and not being able to remember the lingo, but slowly, slowly, slowly the lingo came back. It was easier than I thought to inhabit that life.

Casey talks about what excites her about literature in the book when she’s doing an unexpected job interview, and she says it’s “that reverberation”—a book worming its way into your mind. Now that the book has been out for almost a year, what do you hope is reverberating with readers of Writers & Lovers?

I guess I just want Casey to feel like a real human being to people when they read the book. What I love about reading is jumping into another person’s consciousness. It just gives you a break from your own consciousness, which can be
unrelenting and oppressive at times. I love reading to have the feeling of being someone else for a little while and seeing the world from their eyes and with their language. That’s what I want to reverberate. I love the feeling of reading a book and then putting it down, and going about my day, and having both my consciousness and the consciousness of that writer or that character in my head at the same time. It expands the way you experience your own life just a little bit. I love that. That would be my biggest hope: that I could give that to other people.

BETWEEN THE LINES

Writer Chang-rae Lee, Unleashed

We chatted with the award-winning author about his latest novel, My Year Abroad, before his virtual InPrint appearance tonight.

By Ryan Pati • 2/22/2021 at 9:52am

IMAGE: COURTESY OF INPRINT
FREQUENT READERS OF AWARD-WINNING NOVELIST CHANG-RAE LEE’S WORK might find themselves shocked when they get a taste of his newest novel, *My Year Abroad*.

It’s a radical departure from his previous work, featuring a fresh, funny sensibility that only Lee could render. The book follows a 20-something named Tiller on a wild romp across Asia with his equally enigmatic and charismatic mentor named Pong, who’s eager to provoke the potential he sees in Tiller. Alexandra Schwartz writes in her *New Yorker* review of *My Year Abroad* that “Lee writes like a man released from a cage.”

Why the change?

Lee said the freshness and possibility of Tiller’s perspective was what excited him most because it provoked his own curiosity.

“This book is kind of a hybrid of a coming-of-age novel and a midlife crisis novel,” Lee said. “I didn’t want to write a midlife crisis novel because I find them so utterly dreadful in the usual way. I wanted to capture someone who’s at the beginning of his recognition of himself in the world and to see where that might lead him.”

On Monday Lee will read from *My Year Abroad* as he headlines the sixth installment of InPrint’s 2020-2021 Margaret Root Brown Reading Series with fellow author Lily King. We caught up with Lee to talk about his new novel before the event.

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*The style of My Year Abroad is so distinctive: you have these big, blocky bildungsroman paragraphs, but they’re interspersed with Tiller saying things like “IMHO.” What was it like working out what you wanted the book to look and sound like in terms of the style?*

The tone, the cadence, the lyric he’s going to sing—both literally and figuratively—for me was an early and abiding interest. I’m keenly passionate about language. I always have been. But I think this book, as you say, is in quite a different register. I think most of my other books—in part because of their historical subjects, the time...
of life—they’re quite serious. And in a way, looking back at it, the way that I narrated those books, whether in first- or third-person, was with a mournful heart. (Laughs.) Or at least measured and quite circumspect. And with Tiller, I really wanted to have him spread his wings and fly and swoop, be profane, be childish, be soulful: be everything that he was feeling inside.

I absolutely didn’t want to try to say, “This is exactly how a 20-year-old would sound.” It’s not a transcript like that. It doesn’t mean to be, and it’s not intended to be. What I did want was to try to find a score for all the diversity of his soul. And it’s both boyish and old soul, participating in the popular culture, but also being a keen observer of it. I had a different kind of liberty here that I quite enjoyed.

Confidence in its many forms becomes crucial to the book. We start with the epigraph from Thomas Mann’s Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man, and Tiller ultimately realizes that he might’ve been conned into becoming “a person many factors more capable, a person who might not have otherwise bloomed.” What made confidence such a compelling theme to work through? We normally see confidence flattened out into this positive thing, but we forget sometimes that when someone says “con man,” they’re saying “confidence man.”

I think a lot of people don’t know where that term comes from! And the confidence man is exactly that: someone who blows you up, inspires you, to the point at which you have trust and self-belief, and you feel in some ways invincible. Usually in investments that end poorly, but of course, isn’t that what we do for each other? And especially for our beloved and those closest to us? Isn’t that what we are there for? To support each other—and even to the extent that it may be untrue. And maybe that’s what love is.

And this is Tiller’s journey. He starts as such a flat, unconfident character, and he’s self-styled as completely ordinary. He’s not some ambitious kid who wants to be extraordinary. His extraordinariness—whether real or illusory—is coaxed out enough in a shape that he can see it, and taste it, and maybe believe it. And that’s enough for him to keep going, even though I think in the course of the book he starts to realize, Ah, I don’t know if this is real. That’s the allure and promise of Pong, but that’s the allure and promise of the world. Sometimes, if we’re lucky, it coaxes us and brings out attributes and capacities that we didn’t know we had.
Lastly, are you worried that readers might be shocked when they google what “sounding” means?

“Well, I was shocked when I googled what sounding means. (Laughs.) And I can’t remember how I decided that would happen. Sometimes writers write about their own experience, and thankfully, this is not one of those cases. But often writers write about things that they fear, and what you fear you’re kind of curious about. (Laughs.) It’s one of those arcane things that comes up in whatever sphere of human activity that I thought was kind of outlandish and flagrant and kind of fun. But one of the things that you do as a writer is you have a character, and you’re always trying to find—and there’s an infinite number of ways—but the 500 or 10,000 things that they’re going to confront, see, do that will really bring something out in them. So I hope it does that, and it’s not just this weird sexual thing. It may be small, but it’s an important moment of revelation for Tiller in one small part of his life. I learned something from it. Maybe my readers will learn something, too.”

Maybe just turn SafeSearch on before googling too much.

“Absolutely.”

Feb 22. $5. Virtual event. More info and tickets at inprinthouston.org
Nobel Laureate Kazuo Ishiguro is among the authors appearing at book events Feb. 28-March 7

Virtual book discussions to check out Feb. 28-March 7

Ana Khan | February 27, 2021 Updated: March 1, 2021, 10:44 am

British novelist Kazuo Ishiguro speaks during a press conference at his home in London, Thursday Oct. 5, 2017. Ishiguro, best known for “The Remains of the Day,” won the Nobel Literature Prize on Thursday, marking a return to traditional literature following two years of unconventional choices by the Swedish Academy for the 9-million-kronor ($1 million) prize. (AP Photo/Alastair Grant) Photo Alastair Grant/STF
As we all know, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott lifted the mask mandate and said that the state is "100 percent open." Understandably, many will proceed with caution.

Fortunately, this weekend offers a mix of virtual and in-person offerings. Stay safe and enjoy the welcome sunshine. Here are your best bets for the weekend.

**Sunday, March 7**

**Inprint Margaret Root Brown Reading Series: Kazuo Ishiguro**

Nobel Laureate Kazuo Ishiguro will give a short reading from his new novel *Klara and the Sun*, followed by a conversation with fiction writer Jim Shepard. This livestream event, part of the 40th anniversary, 2020/2021 Inprint Margaret Root Brown Reading Series, will be accessible from the Inprint website. Details on how to access the reading will be provided to season subscribers and to those who purchase general admission tickets in the Eventbrite email receipt. 5 pm.
Best Virtual Bets: Art Heist, Beethoven, and Crazy Rich Asians

NATALIE DE LA GARZA  |  MARCH 4, 2021  |  4:00AM

For those of us who still believe in taking public health and safety precautions, let us present to you this week’s list of best virtual bets. Each one you can either enjoy from the comfort of your home or, for those who’d like to get out of the house responsibly, outdoors and socially distanced.

This Sunday, March 7, at 5 p.m. the 40th anniversary Inprint Margarett Root Brown Reading Series continues when writer Jim Shepard leads a conversation with Nobel Laureate Kazuo Ishiguro. Ishiguro will read from his new novel, Klara and the Sun, written from the perspective of an AF (artificial friend) of a sickly young woman. Though mostly completed before lockdown, The Guardian says it “feels like a message for all of us as we go about our drearily circumscribed days,” as it’s “energised by the friction between two different types of love: one that is selfish, overprotective and anxious, and one that is generous, open and benevolent.” You can purchase a ticket to the livestream for $30, which includes a hardcover copy of the book for U.S. residents.
**BESTSELLERS**

**FICTION**

**1. A Court of Silver Flames**

Sarah J. Maas. The fifth book in “A Court of Thorns and Roses” series. Nesta Archeron is forced into close quarters with a scientist, and appearances are ailing.

**2. The Winds**


**3. The Nightbird**

Elin Peerse. An assassin named Josie is named Cassian.

**4. The Master of the Birds**

James O. Born. The 13th book in the “Greenlights” series. The Cochise County sheriff’s daughter is named Cassian.

**5. Faithless in Death**

J. D. Robb. A cop named Cassian.

**6. Caste**

Isabel Wilkerson. The 13th book in the “Greenlights” series. The Cochise County sheriff’s daughter is named Cassian.

**Nonfiction**

**1. How to Avoid a Climate Disaster**

Bill Gates. A cop named Cassian.

**2. Just I Am**

Cindy Tyson with Michelle Burford. The 13th book in the “Greenlights” series. The Cochise County sheriff’s daughter is named Cassian.

**3. The Sum of Us**

Katherine Kruse. The 13th book in the “Greenlights” series. The Cochise County sheriff’s daughter is named Cassian.

**4. Walk in My Combat Boots**

James Patterson with Chris Morgan-Ross. A cop named Cassian.

**5. Promised Land**

John M. Dorsey. The 13th book in the “Greenlights” series. The Cochise County sheriff’s daughter is named Cassian.

**6. Ghosts with Ordinary Jobs**

William Shatner. The 13th book in the “Greenlights” series. The Cochise County sheriff’s daughter is named Cassian.
FLIPPING THE SCRIPT

Ahead of His Inprint Reading, Viet Thanh Nguyen Talks Literary Influences and Asian American Hate

The Pulitzer Prize winner will read from his long-awaited sequel, The Committed, on April 12.

by Margaret Carmel • 4/9/2021 at 11:10am

VIET THANH NGUYEN ISN’T DONE FLIPPING THE SCRIPT.

In 2016, the Vietnamese American author burst onto the literary scene with his debut, Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, The Sympathizer. The book caught worldwide attention for its blend of literary fiction with a gripping spy story, set against the political intrigue of the Vietnam War. Its protagonist, who remains nameless, tells his story in the form of a forced confession of his acts as a Northern Vietnamese spy embedded with a South Vietnamese general.
And now, the story of the complex character trying to balance the two sides of his dual identity as a half-French, half-Vietnamese man in a divided country, continues. Nguyen’s second novel, *The Committed*, which he will read from during his upcoming Inprint reading on April 12, finds our hero on a boat headed to France as a refugee after the fall of Saigon and contemplating a turn toward capitalism.

After Nguyen finished *The Sympathizer* and put it out into the world, he says the character still nagged him with lingering questions. “I wasn’t done yet with the character of the sympathizer,” he tells *Houstonia* in a phone interview ahead of his digital visit. “There was more to say about him.”

The new book is “carefully written” so anyone can read *The Committed* without being familiar with its predecessor, but the themes of political satire, colonialism, and identity continue. “When we last saw him, he was a revolutionary who was disabused with the communist party,” Nguyen says, “so I wanted to find out what a former revolutionary does that is still in search of a revolution.”

Once he arrives in Paris, the narrator leaves his spy past behind, and the story morphs into a crime novel as our protagonist delves into drug dealing and other “bad choices” while he wrestles with being a Vietnamese man in France, the colonizer of his homeland. The topics are serious, but it’s wrapped up in the entertaining trappings of genre fiction and satire as the main character pokes fun at western power.

In crafting the two books, Nguyen has blended the thrilling action of English novelists John le Carré and Graham Greene with the tradition of exploring identity from Black American novelists Toni Morrison and Ralph Ellison, whose seminal work *Invisible Man* was a major inspiration. He also took some cues from the
playfulness of the children’s fiction he’s been reading with his 7-year-old son and convention-defying poetry.

“I love literary fiction, but sometimes it can be boring,” he says. “And in genre fiction, the one thing you don’t have is stories being boring. The thing that’s interesting in spy and crime fiction is we have writers who want to spin a good yarn, but they’re very aware of politics and history and that’s certainly how I saw myself operating.”

The unique mixture certainly struck a chord. *The Sympathizer* hit The New York Times Best Seller list and brought home the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for fiction, the Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Fiction, and the Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature from the Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association.

And last week, Nguyen announced the novel has been optioned for a TV series by A24.

This comes at a time when, even decades after the Vietnam War, the bulk of American writing and storytelling on the topic is told through the lens of the white soldiers who fought there and the divisive protests on the home front. Nguyen says he set out to write *The Sympathizer* as an “ambitious attack” against American perceptions of the conflict, which he sees as a piece in the long-running history of western countries instigating violence on the continent.

“We’re very war-like people,” he says of Americans. “In the second half of the 20th century, all of our wars were fought in Asia, and the Vietnam War was in many ways an extension of colonialism we took over from the French. Americans don’t like to think about that history because to think of Americans as being complicit in expanding colonialism runs counter to some ideas Americans have about themselves.”

As Nguyen is landing a TV deal and selling thousands of books telling stories of the Asian perspective from the Vietnamese perspective, anti-Asian American racism and violence is on the rise in the U.S. following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Nguyen says the spike of Black Lives Matter activism last summer amid the rising wave of negative attention on Asian American communities show the
importance of these two groups banding together instead of turning against each other to scramble for acceptance.

“It’s necessary for Black people and for Asian Americans to recognize this and have solidarity with each other and recognize the larger system that pits them against each other is a system of colonization and white supremacy,” he says. “That is hopefully evident in both novels. I don’t think they’re only about the Vietnam War or French colonialism.”

April 12. $5. Online. More info and tickets at inprinthouston.org.

Filed under Books, Book Reading, Inprint, Inprint Margaret Root Brown Reading Series
Viet Thanh Nguyen is among the authors appearing at book events this week

Ana Khan | 2 days ago

Pulitzer Prize winner Viet Thanh Nguyen will read from his work as part of the Inprint' Margarett Root Brown Reading Series.
Viet Thanh Nguyen follows up Pulitzer winner with ‘Commitment’

By Andrew Dancy

For a number of little ways, Viet Thanh Nguyen speaks familiarly through his fiction, the little tangles that feel familial. In the grip of this bildungsroman, he tells a story about life and death, comfort and capitalism, about freedom and culture, as we curry that, feel it know and see.

Nguyen’s “The Sympathizer” is a follow-up to “The Sympathizer.” They’re connected in that they follow a half-Vietnamese, half-French protagonist who finds himself in different places around the world and coming to get through cultures problems by sheer force of grace. In the last book, the unnamed sympa-thizer was a spy agent in the Chi Minh era, a rusticated man on the neo-mov. In “The Sympathizer,” on update on the crime novel genre, he becomes a Pusan dock worker. I wanted to know what happens to the revolution when revolution has failed.” Nguyen says. “What happens now? There’s a genre in literat-ure of the disillusioned revolu-tionary. I don’t want to live in the United States and start happily eating Happy Meals at 22. It’s a continuation of a personal ad-venture into the self. In this case, France.

Based on hate mail from the last book, the protagonist is the one to be left off to. In this case, it was the Prussians.

The French are welcome to take offense, as they often do. In the 20th century, Vietnam has largely been neglected in the histor-ical. Nguyen acknowledges a half century of American culture that has attempted to make some of a war in Vietnam that didn’t come among dubious wartime leaders, the French. The first line of “The Sympathizer” is “I’m a spy, a cheater, a fraud, a man of two faces.” He approaches the novel as a tert-ian revolution. He finds the real blank spot that exist when a genre is allowed to codify. The recent passing of Larry McMurtry underscores a brutal comparison. Much in the way McMurtry tried to subvert a romanticized notion of the Western with “Lonesome Dove,” Nguyen undermined and disemboweled spy novel caricatures with “The Sympathizer,” organizing the old lines between good and evil were far more muddled than presented.

“The Committed” pivots from that point toward the crime-novel genre. One reader notes: “The Sympathizer” is appropriate. “The Committees” help, but Nguyen doesn’t fold the book back into the neo-mov. But Nguyen’s two novels, their protagonists, are sharp: that our age believes serious things, and he’s witnessed complicated things happening. But there are still struggles for Asian people of color in this country.”

“The Vietnamese and Asians are often depicted in the American imagination as victims,” he says. “And if we’ve been forced out of places we call home. But he also wants the charac-ter to be an active part of the books in history. There’s some agency that I felt was needed to undo the damage that led to a sense of other-ness. Colonialism, capitalism, social-isms and others have a dark history behind them. Nguyen’s book call out their many shortcomings while also hopes of framing a different story in a literat-ure of the disillusioned revolutionary. It’s a third time past: the first time, a series of events that led to a sense of other-ness. Colonialism, capitalism, social-isms and others have a dark history behind them. Nguyen’s book call out their many shortcomings while also

The Viet Thanh Nguyen virtual event

When: Thursday, April 8
Details: bit. infthouston.org

“The COMMITTED”

By Viet Thanh Nguyen


It’s a continuation of a personal adventure into the self. In this case, France. Nguyen’s early life was permeated with wrongful movements. His family moved from North Vietnam when he was a child. When he was just 4, Saigon fell, and the family fled to the United States. Nguyen has attempted to make sense of a war that was so uniquely her own.

Nguyen’s debut novel, “The Sympathizer,” was one of the most successful books of the year. It told the story of a half-Vietnamese, half-French protagonist who finds himself in different places around the world and coming to get through cultures problems by sheer force of grace. In the last book, the unnamed sympathizer was a spy agent in the Vietnam War, a rusticated man on the neo-mov. Nguyen’s “The Sympathizer” is a follow-up to “The Sympathizer.” They’re connected in that they follow a half-Vietnamese, half-French protagonist who finds himself in different places around the world and coming to get through cultures problems by sheer force of grace.

In “The Committed,” Nguyen continues this exploration of the complex and contradictory effects of the Vietnam War. The novel is a sequel to Nguyen’s Pulitzer Prize-winning debut novel, “The Sympathizer.” “The Committed” is a continuation of a personal adventure into the self. In this case, France. Nguyen’s early life was permeated with wrongful movements. His family moved from North Vietnam when he was a child. When he was just 4, Saigon fell, and the family fled to the United States. Nguyen has attempted to make sense of a war that was so uniquely her own.

Nguyen’s debut novel, “The Sympathizer,” was one of the most successful books of the year. It told the story of a half-Vietnamese, half-French protagonist who finds himself in different places around the world and coming to get through cultures problems by sheer force of grace. In the last book, the unnamed sympathizer was a spy agent in the Vietnam War, a rusticated man on the neo-mov. Nguyen’s “The Sympathizer” is a follow-up to “The Sympathizer.” They’re connected in that they follow a half-Vietnamese, half-French protagonist who finds himself in different places around the world and coming to get through cultures problems by sheer force of grace.
A year into remote theater and Houston performing arts companies have learned to get creative.

Yes, we’re still streaming some dramatic and comic theater goodness, but April also offers a plethora of different performances modes from live actors on your front lawn to virtual conferencing with a semi-omnipotent nun.

For some spring variety, we’ve also got some dramatic opera, dance and poetry on our must-see list. And if you manage to get through it all, be sure to check out this special “Thank You, Houston” message from the city’s Actors’ Equity Association (plus one, likely non-union, guinea pig).

Jericho Brown reading from the Inprint Margarett Root Brown Reading Series (live streaming April 26)

Not theater, but we can’t let poetry month go by without highlighting the poetic return of Jericho Brown, the 2020 Pulitzer Prize in poetry winner. Earning his PhD from the University of Houston Creative Writing Program, Brown won an Inprint C. Glenn Cambor Fellowships and spent time teaching writing workshops for senior citizens in the Fifth Ward.

Brown comes home, remotely at least, to share poems from his most recent and acclaimed collection The Tradition.
Inprint hosts poetry event with Pulitzer winner Jericho Brown

Jericho Brown, winner of the 2020 Pulitzer Prize in poetry, will read from "the Tradition" April 26 as part of Inprint's 40th anniversary celebration.

Photo: Collage
Jericho Brown returns to Houston for a virtual reading tied to National Poetry Month. He’ll read from “The Tradition” and his other works as part of Inprint Houston’s Margarett Root Brown Reading Series.

A Shreveport, La., native and an alumnus and former professor at the University of Houston, Brown has been publishing his poems for well over a decade now, earning a Whiting Award and an American Book Award, as well as a Guggenheim Fellowship.


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**Jericho Brown reading**

**When:** 7 p.m. April 26

**Details:** $5; inprintheum.org
POETIC GENIUS

Jericho Brown Talks Police Brutality, Time in Houston Ahead of Inprint Reading

The UH alum will read for his Pulitzer Prize-winning poetry collection, The Tradition, on April 26.

By Margaret Carmel • 4/23/2021 at 6:00am
TO MANY, JERICHO BROWN’S POETRY SPEAKS TO THIS particular moment of civil rights activism condemning police brutality. But that’s not all there is to his work, though.

Brown, 45, hit his literary zenith last year when he took home the 2020 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry for his third collection, *The Tradition*, an earthquakingly masterful work that bends the traditional conventions of poetic form to confront many forms of evil in our society, from sexual violence to mass murder and, yes, the deaths of Black Americans at the hands of police.

In a conversation conducted the day after the Derek Chauvin verdict, Brown is quick to point out there are just as many, if not more, poems in his collection about family and erotic love as there are about police brutality. His work, he says, captures the whole spectrum of his life experience, not just how he moves through the world as a Black man in the South.

“It’s always fascinating to me that I wrote a poem about flowers, about the natural world, about the environment, and that, no matter how much I write about that, folks can’t see that because, of course, I have to write about that along with my race,” he says ahead of his upcoming Inprint reading on April 26. “I believe that we’re capable of holding more than one thing in our hands at a time.

One of those elements he’s always holding in his hands and heart is his time in the Bayou City—a time that, like his poetry, was filled with both wonder and heartbreak. The Louisiana native vividly recalls the night in graduate school when he was stopped by police and thrown onto the hood of his car to be searched following a drag show at JR’s Bar. Why he was stopped, he’s still not sure, but the experience is one in a long line of bad experiences he and other Black Americans he knows have had with the police.

But it was also in Houston, and especially at the Inprint readings he frequently attended while earning his Ph.D. in creative writing and literature at the University of Houston, that Brown encountered many famous writers, including Mary Oliver and John Updike, and continued to build the foundations of his poetry.

Brown, who currently leads Emory University’s creative writing program, has come a long way since he left Houston—“kicking and screaming,” he jokes—following his graduation in 2007. In addition to a Pulitzer, he’s received the American Book and National Book Critics Circle awards and has been named a Guggenheim fellow; his latest collection was also a National Book Award finalist.

But it’s because of his Houston memories, both good and bad, that the poet says he
never misses an opportunity to return to the vibrant city where he came into his own as a writer. Making this visit even more special is the fact that it’s his first time attending an Inprint event as the guest of honor (he has previously appeared as a featured salon reader during Inprint’s 2013 Poets & Writers Ball).

Part of Brown wishes he’d delayed this full-circle moment until he could experience it in person and be part of the synergistic environment he remembers so fondly. But he wants to be a part of bringing art to people who need it most in these trying times.

“No more than ever people have been ... in need of poetry,” he says. “The poets have become the superheroes of this moment because we are supplying people with what they didn't know they needed.”

April 26. $5. Online. More info and tickets at inprinthouston.org.
Best Virtual Bets: Fashion, *Pretty Fire*, and *The Sound of Music*

Natalie De La Garza  |  May 6, 2021  |  4:00AM

Jhumpa Lahiri, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning collection of short stories titled *The Interpreter*, will be featured on Monday, May 10, at 7 p.m., concluding the 2020/2021 Inprint Margaret Root Brown Reading Series. Lahiri will join author Yaa Gyasi in conversation and give a short reading from *Whereabouts*, her first novel since 2013 and the first novel Lahiri's written in Italian (and translated to English). The book, “a muted portrait of urban solitude,” spends “a year in the inner life of a solitary woman in an unnamed European city.” You can purchase a $25 ticket to view the livestream here, and note that each ticket comes with a hardcover copy of *Whereabouts*. 
Jhumpa Lahiri is among the authors appearing at book events this week

Featured authors for this week’s book discussions include Ragnar Jonasson, Jeffery Deaver and Ashley Elston.

Ana Khan | May 9, 2021 Updated: May 10, 2021, 9:29 am

Inprint Margaret Root Brown Reading Series presents author Jhumpa Lahiri.

Photo: Liana Mucci

MONDAY

Jhumpa Lahiri: Author will give a short reading from her new novel, “Whereabouts,” followed by a conversation with American Book Award winner Yaa Gyasi, as part of Inprint’s Margaret Root Brown Reading Series. The event will be streamed on Inprint’s website; tickets, $25, include a copy of the book. 7 p.m., inprinthouston.org