

**MAINE
HUMANITIES
COUNCIL**

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**SUMMER
2022**

JOIN THE DISCUSSION



NEW LEADERSHIP

Samaa Abdurraqib is the 4th Executive Director of the MHC

After a nationwide search, the MHC has named Samaa Abdurraqib, PhD, as its newest executive director.

Samaa received her PhD in English at the University of Wisconsin and has called Maine home since 2010. She has worked as a visiting assistant professor in the Gender & Women's Studies Department at Bowdoin College, as a reproductive freedom organizer at the ACLU of Maine, and as a program coordinator for the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence. Samaa has also served on the boards of several Maine nonprofits and has worked for several Maine organizations as a contract consultant, leadership coach, and facilitator.

Samaa previously served as the MHC's associate director, acting executive director, and as a contracted facilitator for six years. Her deep and intimate knowledge of our mission and her connections with organizations and communities all over Maine promise to take the MHC in a new and exciting direction as we work to make the humanities accessible to an ever-widening circle of people across the state.

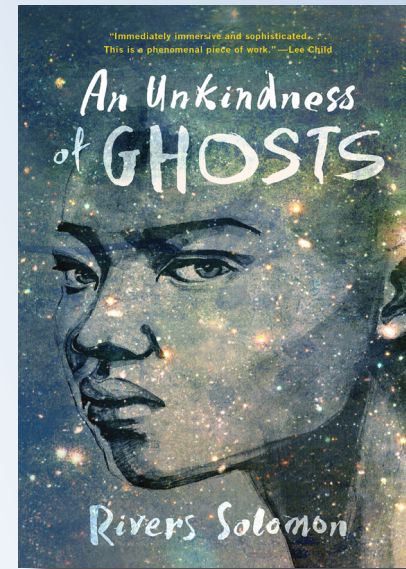


"Finding myself back in a place where I am again surrounded by books and big ideas feels like a homecoming."

- Samaa Abdurraqib, Executive Director

Overlooked Narratives

Continuing our engagement with Afrofuturism and Africanfuturism



An Unkindness of Ghosts will be featured across our programming and explored together at Readers Retreat 2023.

In her recent book, *Out of the Sun: On Race and Storytelling*, novelist Esi Edugyan calls herself 'a storyteller with an interest in overlooked narratives...curious as to why we sideline some stories and mythologize others.' In her chapter on 'Africa and the Art of the Future,' she says: "The dominant narrative tilts the axis of memory—its triumph is the triumph of being seen. Faced with this reality, then, Afrofuturism purposefully invents a future based on what has been destroyed through ignorance, recreating a past as it builds a startling new world of the possible."

The Featured Book for Readers Retreat 2023, *An Unkindness of Ghosts*, by Rivers Solomon is a book that does all these things—we can't wait for you to read it, talk about it, share it with a friend.

WAYS to JOIN

People and organizations across Maine host Discussion Projects, Maine Speaks, and Poetry Express events, and our grants support a wide variety of projects and programs – all aiming to foster real discussion about things that matter.

Join the discussion. Participate in a project or program near you.

Create a new opportunity for discussion. Apply for a program or a grant.

Donate. Help connect communities with books, poetry, and big ideas.

Upcoming

Maine Speaks Fall Programs

Applications due September 10

Discussion Project Fall Programs

Start September

Spring Applications

Open September 23

Grants

Mini Grants

Proposals due August 18

Major Grants

Open November 8

Arts & Humanities

Proposals due October 24

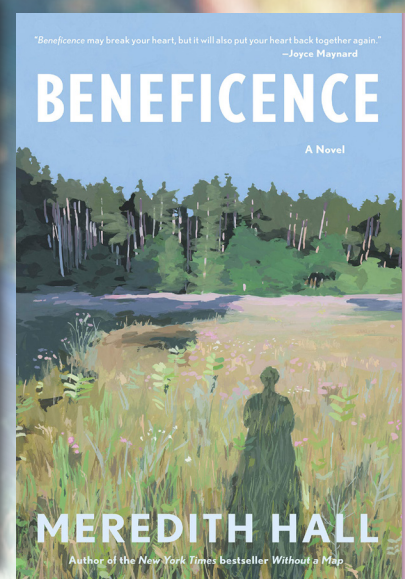
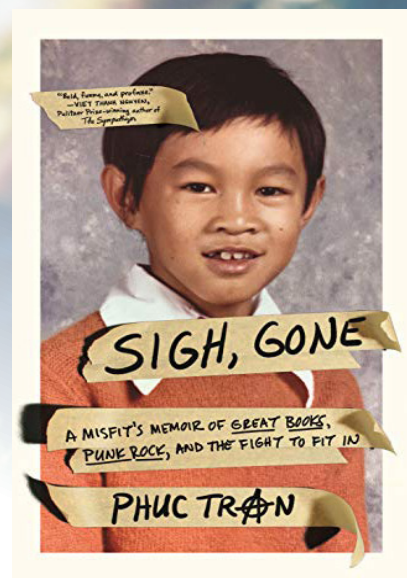
Read ME

For the sixth summer in a row, libraries across Maine are participating in Read ME, our statewide summer read offered in partnership with Maine State Library. This summer's slate of book discussions and author talks feature *Sigh, Gone* by Phuc Tran and *Benevolence* by Meredith Hall. Both books are recommended by author Christina Baker Kline.

FEATURED SITES

Naples & Casco Public Libraries partnered to offer 2022's Read ME titles as a special MHC Discussion Project in their community.

Newport Cultural Center is one of several libraries hosting an in-person talk with Meredith Hall, author of *Benevolence*.



64 libraries across Maine are participating in Read ME 2022.

Recommending author Christina Baker Kline selected Phuc Tran's *SIGH, GONE* and Meredith Hall's *BENEVOLENCE* as this summer's featured books.

Connection, Engagement, AGENCY

When we talk about the impact of our work, one of the words we use is agency. But what is it?

One way we think about it is as the ability to choose what to do and to do it, on one's own behalf, according to one's own lights. What do poetry and stories and big ideas have to do with agency?

One answer is that our sense of our own agency depends so much on the way we see ourselves, the way we feel, in a situation, a moment, a place, our life. And in order to feel able to make choices, we have to be able to imagine options, possibilities, a variety of versions of how we ourselves can nudge this current moment one way or another...to imagine we can nudge it towards a version that includes our own flourishing. Poems and stories and big ideas are tools that help us do that. Imagine what might be possible.

Whether they're participating in a Discussion Project, attending a Maine Speaks event, performing in Poetry Express, or using a grant to create their own project, we hear and see people finding and expanding their sense of what they can do.