

women & words

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A celebration of **women**,
their **words** and
achievements

Saturday, September 24, 2011
Olympic Collection in West LA

Thank you for joining us for the tenth (can you believe it!) annual Women & Words conference. A small dream of mine back in 2003 has become a solid reality with this year's sell-out crowd. It is always such a joy to hear how much you look forward to joining us at Women & Words' events. So many of you have brought your friends and family members to share in the celebration, and we are very grateful for this support. The hard work that these events require is quickly forgotten when I feel your positive energy and get your feedback. For the past year, Women & Words has worked to bring you women authors of excellence to share their passion for writing, and the stories that come from their hearts. Our event's designated beneficiary is Echo Parenting & Education, an agency that since 1999 has been helping parents and professionals to imagine a world in which all children are raised free from physical and emotional harm. We hope that this day will become your celebration of women's words and achievements that you will always look forward to, and continue to share with your friends.

*Gratefully yours,
Sheila Irani, Executive Director*

Our Distinguished Authors



Aimee Bender is the author of four books: *The Girl in the Flammable Skirt* (1998) which was a NY Times Notable Book, *An Invisible Sign of My Own* (2000) which was an L.A. Times pick of the year, *Willful Creatures* (2005) which was nominated by *The Believer* as one of the best books of the year, and *The Particular Sadness of Lemon Cake* (2010) which recently won the SCIBA award for best fiction.

Her short fiction has been published in *Granta*, *GQ*, *Harper's*, *Tin House*, *McSweeney's*, *The Paris Review*, and many more places, as well as heard on PRI's *This American Life* and *Selected Shorts*. She received two Pushcart prizes, and was nominated for the TipTree award in 2005, and the Shirley Jackson short story award in 2010. Her fiction has been translated into sixteen languages. She lives in Los Angeles, where she teaches creative writing at USC.



Anne Cherian was born and raised in Jamshedpur, India. She received her BA degree from Bangalore University in English, Psychology and Economics. She received her first master's degree in English and Linguistics from Bombay University. She received two more master's degrees from UC Berkeley, in Comparative Literature (English and Classical Greek) and Journalism. Anne has traveled widely in Europe and Asia, and lived in Japan for a year. "A Good Indian Wife" is her first novel. The novel won the 2009 South Asian Excellence Literature Award, and the Italian edition was a finalist for the Premio Roma award as well as the Tropea Literary Prize. The novel had been translated into French, and the Slovenian version is forthcoming. She is currently working on her second novel, entitled "The Invitation," which is forthcoming from WW Norton. The novel is set in the present, and looks at how four Indian students, who met each other UCLA in the 1980s, have succeeded in achieving the American dream.



Susan Straight has published five novels, *Aquaboogie*, *I Been In Sorrow's Kitchen* and *Licked Out All The Pots*, which was named one of the best novels of 1992 by both USA Today and Publisher's Weekly, as well as named a Notable Book by the New York Times, *Blacker Than a Thousand Midnights*, *The Gettin Place*), and *Highwire Moon* which was a finalist for the National Book Award and won the Commonwealth of California Gold Medal for Fiction. *Highwire Moon* was a San Francisco Chronicle bestseller and Los Angeles Times bestseller, and was named one of the year's best novels by The San Francisco Chronicle and The Washington Post. *A Million Nightingales*, has received critical acclaim.

In her novels, Straight magically opens windows into the history of oppressed women of color living throughout America. *A Million Nightingales*, describes the world of being a light-skinned slave girl, stolen from her mother and forced into a cruel and inhumane existence in 19th century Louisiana that she survives by placing hope and compassion above all other emotions. The basis of the book was the author's fear of suddenly losing one of her three daughters, and needing to expose the hardships that were created in the past towards women because of their social position and color of skin. Her latest novel is *Take One Candle Light A Room*, "which was Marie-Therese's defiant affirmation that her daughter Fantine, conceived from rape, brightened her enslaved existence. Here it becomes a mandate for Fantine, who finally sees her way clear to honoring her family's history while shining a light toward a different future for herself and her godson.



Meg Waite Clayton's first novel, *The Language of Light*, was a finalist for the Bellwether Prize; her second, the national bestseller *The Wednesday Sisters*, was a book club favorite throughout the country. Her new novel, *The Four Ms. Bradwells*, will be published in March 2011. Clayton's novels have been translated into languages from German to Chinese. Her shorter works have appeared in commercial and literary magazines including *Runner's World*, *Writer's Digest*, and *The Literary Review*, in addition to being read on public radio and anthologized. She is a graduate of the University of Michigan Law School, and lives in Northern California.



Mona Simpson was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin, then moved to Los Angeles as a young teenager. Her father was a recent immigrant from Syria and her mother was the daughter of a mink farmer and the first person in her family to attend college. Simpson went to Berkeley, where she studied poetry. She worked as a journalist before moving to New York to attend Columbia's MFA program. During graduate school, she published her first short stories in *Ploughshares*, *The Iowa Review* and *Mademoiselle*. She stayed in New York and worked as an editor at *The Paris Review* for five years while finishing her first novel, *Anywhere But Here*. After that, she wrote *The Lost Father*, *A Regular Guy* and *Off Keck Road*.

Her work as been awarded several prizes: a Whiting Prize, a Guggenheim, a grant from the NEA, a Hodder Fellowship from Princeton University, a Lila Wallace Readers Digest Prize, a Chicago Tribune Heartland Prize, a Pen Faulkner finalist, and most recently a Literature Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

She worked for ten years on *My Hollywood*. "It's the book that took me too long because it meant too much to me," she says. Mona lives in Santa Monica with her two children and Bartelby, the dog.

WOMEN & WORDS PAST AUTHORS:

2004: CHITRA DIVAKARUNI LIZ DOLAN PATT MORRISON SENA JETER NASLUND LISA SEE

2005: MARTHA BECK DENISE HAMILTON SHIRLEY TAYLOR HAIZLIP JANE JUSKA CASSANDRA KING HELIE LEE

2006: MARY GORDON SONIA NAZARIO DENISE NICHOLAS NINA REVOYR KAREN STABINER SUSAN STRAIGHT

2007: ANITA AMIRREZVANI MERRILL MARKOE NICOLE MONES GABRIELLE PINA ERIKA SCHICKEL GAIL TSUKIYAMA

2008: GIOCONDA BELLI MARINA NEMAT KRIS RADISH CECILIA SAMARTIN MARISA SILVER

SPRING 2009: MARGARET LESLIE DAVIS REYNA GRANDE SARAH SHUN-LIEN BYNUM JENNIE NASH AMY WILENTZ

FALL 2009: SHILPA AGARWAL JUDITH FREEMAN MARY ELLEN GEIST ANN PACKER JACQUELINE WINSPEAR

SPRING 2010: Gayle Brandeis, Patricia Smiley, Tatjani Soli, Mary Yukari Waters

FALL 2010: CARA BLACK GABRIELLE BURTON K.C. COLE MEGHAN DAUM HEIDI DURROW

Warm Appreciation to:

- ♥ My friend and partner, Roslyn Fanello without whom this event could not happen. Her energy and support is not only admired by me, but by the many friends who have been avid supporters of Women & Words.
- ♥ My friends and cheerleaders, Linda Friedman, bookseller par excellence, who has guided us since our inception with enthusiasm, experience and wisdom and her assistant Jan Wilcox, who has been our supporter since 2004 when we began this journey into promoting literature by women authors.
- ♥ All of you who have given us your day and made Women & Words such a success. Thank you for your confidence in us. You know that we want to give you the best in the world of literature not just as a source of entertainment, but also as a source of education. We do this as a labor of love with the heartfelt desire to turn up the volume of women's voices and let change begin.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge our sponsors for their generous silent auction gifts:

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