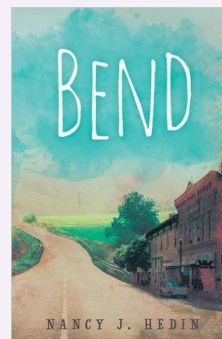
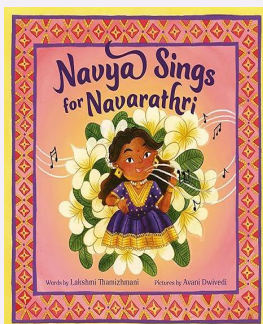
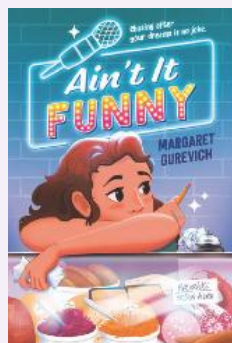




BELCASTRO
agency



2026

Children's Rights Catalog

Phone: 330-398-0721

Ella Marie Shupe – Vice President/Rights Director

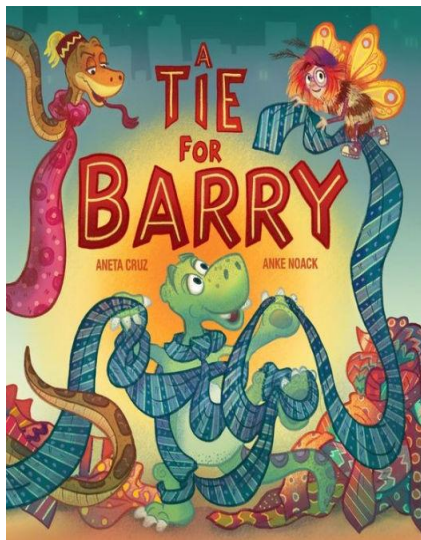
ellamarie@belcastroagency.com

belcastroagency.com

Table of Contents

Picture Books	page 2
Middle Grade	page 5
Young Adult	page 10
Select Backlist	page 13

Picture Books



A TIE FOR BARRY

By Aneta Cruz

Exisle Publishing, Winter 2025

Belcastro Agency : Amy Giuffrida

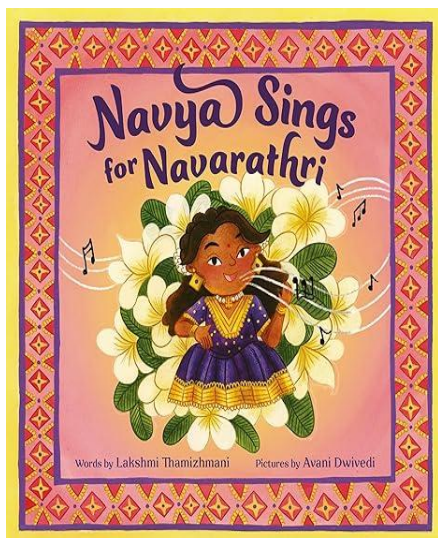
Rights Available:

- Merchandising
- Film/TV
- Dramatic Rights/Performance

About a Brontosaurus whose determination to find the perfect tie for school teaches him to accept his unique disability.

Author Bio Aneta Cruz was born and raised behind the Iron Curtain in the then Czechoslovakia, where she found liberation through books. Since immigrating to the US, Aneta has earned a BA in English Literature, MFA in Creative Writing, and an Early Childhood Special Education Credential. When she's not teaching her class of preschoolers diagnosed with Autism and Speech/Language Impairment how to love books (among other things) as much as she does, she reads and writes them. Books: Juan Has the Jitters (2020, North AtlanticBooks) stronaut Training (2021, Astra Books for Young Readers)





Navya Sings for Navarathri

By Lakshmi Thamizhmani

Harper Collins – August 2024

Belcastro Agency: Sharon Belcastro

Rights Available:

- Translation
- Merchandising
- Multimedia/Gaming
- Film/TV
- Audio
- Dramatic Rights/Performance

Celebrate Navarathri, the nine-night Hindu festival honoring the divine feminine, with this empowering picture book by Indian American creators Lakshmi Thamizhmani and Avani Dwivedi!

From visiting with family to golu hopping and more, Navya loves everything about Navarathri—except singing in front of a crowd. She's too afraid. Will the support of her female relatives and the goddess Durga help Navya overcome her fear?

This empowering story of girlhood, Shakti, and the nine days of Navarathri is perfect for festival celebrations!

Includes an author's note, glossary, more information about the holiday, and a recipe for a chickpea snack.

CBA Grad, and SCBWI member, Lakshmi divides her time between her corporate tech job, daydreaming, and writing. After moving from India to the U.S., she wrote for newspapers but discovered a passion for creative writing instead.

Lakshmi now writes beautiful, lesser-known stories to bridge cultures and transport children to new worlds to learn and celebrate diversity.



Middle Grade

Praise

Peril At Price Manor

"Halle's vast knowledge of horror tropes combines with the idiosyncratic skill sets of the long-cloistered Price offspring, and between a roller-skating disco, sousaphone practice, and a horrifying foray into a stinky cheese cellar, they tackle the tickly nemeses and prove themselves resourceful and brave in the process. Playing lightly on the tropes of classic B-movie horror, Parnum's imaginative and satisfying debut is packed with high-spirited hijinks. Playful energy propels a laugh-out-loud scary story that doesn't tread too far into truly terrifying territory." — **Kirkus Reviews**

"[A] good-humored romp. Debut author Parnum keeps the scares gentle but gooey via lively prose that conveys a vibrant setting. Quick-moving chapters and alternating perspectives that showcase the characters' dawning agency make for a propulsive creature feature." — **Publishers Weekly**

"Parnum's whip-smart narrative pokes fun at its own genre with a classic middle-grade cheekiness, giving each character depth beyond their archetypes. The three main characters have a delightful combination of bizarre talents. A playful acknowledgement that overbearing parents stop their kids from fully experiencing the world, this is a fantastic combination of mild locked-room horror and heroes who manifest in unlikely and hilarious ways." — **Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books**



THE GINGHAMS

By: TC Kemper

Holt Books for Young Readers – Spring 2026

Belcastro Agency : Amy Giuffrida

Rights Available:

- Multimedia, game, merchandising, and commercial rights
- Film/TV
- Dramatic rights

An eerie middle grade mystery debut that follows a young girl who returns home to find the people of her little town, including her best friend, chillingly *changed* after the arrival of the prim and proper Gingham family.

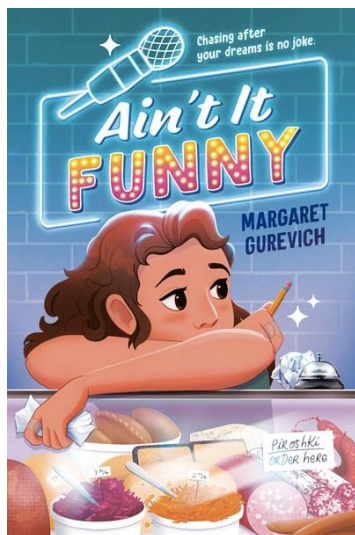
When 12-year-old Joni Bird returns home from summer camp, it's clear something strange is afoot in Olive Springs. May, her usually head-banging best friend, now wears her hair in a tight bun and calls playing the drums "unladylike." The ice cream shop only serves vanilla ice cream. The women and girls of the neighborhood all sport big pearl earrings and crisp cotton dresses.

At the heart of it all? The creepy new family in the neighborhood with their soulless, carnival smiles and retro fashion sense: the Ginghams. Everyone they invite to their Thursday night book club re-emerges as dead-eyed, smiling, Gingham-approved "model citizens," all thanks to Mr. Gingham's lifestyle guide, *The Pillars of Perfection*--and something even more sinister hidden behind his basement door.

Through quick thinking and cunning, Joni and her friend Tyler set out to fight not only to get their friend May back, but to save their whole town from forever falling under the Gingham's control.

Author Bio: T.C. Kemper is an American author of sparky kidlit and speculative fiction. When she's not sipping peppermint tea sweetened with local honey or hiking woodland trails with her family and rescue pup, she's likely lost in a beautifully crafted story. *The Ginghams* is her debut novel. tckemper.com





Ain't It Funny

By Margaret Gurevich

Penguin Workshop – October 2024

Belcastro Agency : Kaitlyn Katsoupis

Rights Available:

- Merchandising
- Multimedia/Gaming
- Film/TV
- Dramatic Rights/Performance

For fans of *Stand Up, Yumi Chung!* and *The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl* comes an honest and heartfelt novel about a girl who's determined not to let her growing anxiety and OCD hold her back from using stand-up comedy to bring her parents back together.

Eleven-year-old Maya's life is bit of a mess. Her dad just moved out to pursue his stand-up comedy dreams, her mom seems more preoccupied with running the family's Russian deli than getting Dad back, and Maya's anxiety and germ worries have only been heightening. Her grandma always tells her "slozi goryu ne pomozhet"—tears won't help sorrow—but right now it's hard to be strong. So when her teacher Ms. Banta announces the sixth-grade talent show, Maya sees an opportunity. If she can perform stand-up comedy in the show, she can prove to her mom and dad that comedy has a place in all their lives and try to bring them together again. But conquering her fears amidst her family falling apart and a growing hot-hot-hot feeling inside is easier said than done . . . In this authentic novel full of both humor and heartbreak, Margaret Gurevich crafts a story about comedy, fractured family, and learning how strength comes in many forms.

[AUTHOR BIO]

Margaret Gurevich (she/her) is a middle-school teacher and the author of *Who Was?* books as well as the award-winning *Chloe by Design* series. She has dabbled in stand-up comedy and, like Maya, sometimes crafts jokes in her head while doing errands. She also has many great memories of cooking Russian food with her grandmother. When not writing or teaching, Margaret enjoys hiking, bingeing too many shows, and spending time with her family. She lives in New Jersey with her husband, son, and their wise cat, Goosie.





Peril at Price Manor

By Laura Parnum

Harper Collins – August 2023

Rights Available:

- Merchandising
- Multimedia/Gaming
- Film/TV
- Dramatic Rights/Performance
- Graphic Novel

A tween aspiring horror movie actress pairs up with the twin children of her favorite director to defeat zombifying octopus-like creatures!

Halle dreams of becoming a scream queen. She practices her loudest scream every day and has learned a lot from studying the horror movies of her favorite director, Maximus Price. Maximus lives just outside town, and when the chance to go to his home arises, Halle grabs it with both hands. She doesn't realize that real life horrors await her at Price Manor.

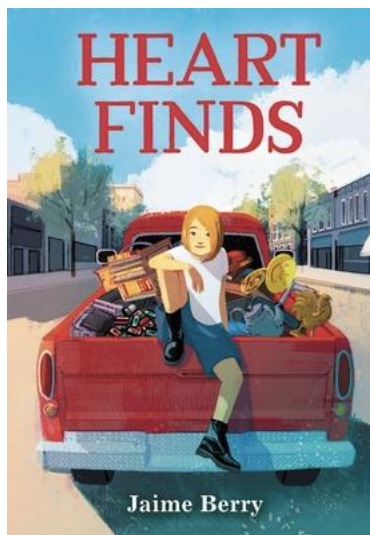
Paisley and Argyle, Maximus's twin children, think that the creepy, squid-like creatures that have attached themselves to the faces of the manor's staff, putting them in a zombie-like stupor, are just another one of their prankster dad's tricks. When Halle arrives and is attacked by one of the creatures, she meets the twins and assures them that this is no joke. The three kids will have to work together using all of their unusual talents to defeat the monsters--and maybe even save the world.

Book two in the series forthcoming.

[AUTHOR BIO]

Laura Parnum writes stories that blend humor and heart with a touch of horror. When she's not writing, she's editing other people's stories and helping out at the local elementary school library. She currently serves as Co-Regional Advisor for the Eastern Pennsylvania region of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. Laura lives with her family in Philadelphia. They have a turtle that bites and a snake that doesn't.





HEART FINDS

By Jaime Berry

Little, Brown and Company

Belcastro Agency: Kaitlyn Katsoupis – November 2022

Rights Available:

- Film/TV
- Dramatic
- Merchandising
- Syndication

12-year-old Mabel Cunningham, a quiet, pun-loving loner, doesn't fit in at school or at home. Her former beauty queen mother is a professional party planner and competitive tablescaper where perfection and precision reign. Only with her grampa does Mabel feel free to be herself. Their favorite thing is extreme treasure hunts, aka dumpster dives. And nothing excites Mabel more than an amazing find and the maybes that come along with it. But when her one friendship starts to crumble and her grandfather suffers a stroke that lands him an assisted living facility, she quickly learns that real-life maybes are harder to handle than imagined ones.

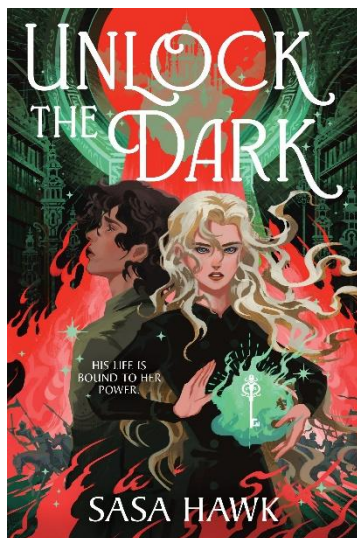
To Mabel and her grandfather, certain objects are a magical, once-in-a-lifetime occurrence; they call them heartfinds. Desperate to change things back to the way they were, Mabel swipes her grandfather's heartfind to get it appraised at an Antique's Roadshow-like program, thinking she can fix everything if it's worth a lot of money. But bringing her plan to fruition means lying to her grampa and risking her mother's chance at winning a national competition. Will Mabel learn that letting go of the past doesn't mean letting go of her grampa and that embracing the future might be one of her most amazing finds yet?

Author Bio:

Jaime Berry released her debut *Hope Springs* with Little, Brown, in Aug 2021. As a teacher and staff developer, Jaime Berry has been published in a nonfiction collection entitled *Negotiating Literacy Learning: Exploring the Challenges and Achievements of Struggling Readers, K-6*. She is a native of rural Oklahoma and an active member of SCBWI. After years with two small boys in a too small apartment, Jaime and her husband moved to the wilds of suburban New Jersey and added another boy to the mix. There, they live in a purple Victorian house that, despite slowly falling apart, they all love. And where telling, reading, and writing stories still takes up most of her day.



Young Adult



UNLOCK THE DARK

By: Sasa Hawk

**Harper Collins Childrens, Winter 2025-
Fantasy**

Belcastro Agency: Amy Giuffrida

Rights Available:

- Foreign Language
- Merchandise and commercial
- Dramatic, motion picture, television, radio, games, apps,

Elia Venture must save her cursed brother, dying father, and a handsome prince-turned-monster before the cheated god of death claims them all, but she must master her magical unlocking ability and complete a dangerous magical rite before time runs out for them all.

Elia illegally keeps her father alive because siphoning magic from his non-responsive body helps provide for their family. She has the rare ability to conjure keys, which she combines with her father's door-enchancing magic to offer quick getaways for patrons of her family's voyage shop. When a prince offers a fortune for a single commission, Elia is certain her financial worries are over. But then he requests a secret key and door to a magical library that exists in a forbidden realm where Elia is a wanted fugitive.

Elia refuses the risk, but when the god of death smites her youngest brother with a curse that will kill him, she has no choice but to accompany the prince on his journey and search for the scroll rumored to contain a cure. When the prince unwittingly unleashes an ancient monster that possesses him, Elia must choose between saving her brother or the cursed prince who threatens to demolish their entire world.

Author Bio:

Sasa Hawk's short stories have appeared in Factor Four Magazine, The Colored Lens, Rose Red Review, and Three Rivers Review. UNLOCK THE DARK is her novel debut.





DEAD GIRLS TALKING

By: Megan Cooley Peterson

Holiday House – June 2024

Belcastro Agency : Amy Giuffrida

Rights Available:

- Merchandise and commercial
- Dramatic, motion picture, television, radio, games, apps, web-

When Bettina Holland was six-years-old, she was found alone with her mother's dead body and covered in blood. The killer? Bett's father. Little Bett's testimony helped put him away for life. Ever since, her story's been exploited for profit by movie producers, podcasters, and online conspiracy theorists who claim her father is innocent.

Now sixteen, Bett thought her worst day was behind her—until she finds a murdered woman in the woods in her small North Carolina town. A woman who looks eerily similar to her mother. A woman killed in the exact same way as her mother. And a chilling message left behind by the killer—I'm back.

Tired of being a victim, Bett decides to be the hero of her own story and solve the crime. She teams up with outcast Eugenia Cline, daughter of their town's only undertaker, who has her own reasons for wanting to play detective. An unlikely duo, they question suspects and chase down leads the police ignore.

After another body is found, they fear a serial killer has come to Wolf Ridge. And not just any killer—someone trying to copy her father's infamous murder. But as the killer targets people closer to Bett's orbit, she fears the murders may not be copycats after all but the twisted finale of her mother's true killer.

Author Bio: Megan Cooley Peterson is the author of *The Liar's Daughter* (Holiday House, 2019), which was chosen as a YALSA Quick Pick for Reluctant Readers and as a top-ten pick for the 2021 TAYSHAS list. Megan is also a freelance editor and writer of children's nonfiction for the school library market.



Select Back List

Praise

Before We Were Blue

Gr 8 Up-Set in a facility for girls with eating disorders, the story unfolds from two perspectives. Shoshana is a Jewish girl who has a passion for cheerleading. Her team is going for a world championship in cheer and not only that, the team is the subject of a reality show that follows the girls from the gym to the competitions. Her parents are very supportive of her choices, but when she stopped eating, they sought professional help. Rowan has been in and out of treatment centers over several years and tries to play the system in her efforts not to eat. She has a dysfunctional relationship with her single mother and claims that it was her mother who taught her unhealthy eating habits. The two teens become fast friends, but Rowan does not know about the reality show and the hundreds of thousands of followers that Shoshana has on social media. The two try to escape the facility, and when that fails, the friendship becomes extremely rocky. The nurses and therapists are portrayed in a mostly positive light, and treatment is shown to be a process not a quick fix. VERDICT This will be popular with readers who like to read about teens having to combat great personal challenges.-Elizabeth Kahn, Patrick F. Taylor Science & Technology Academy, Avondale, LA(c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly

Acting the Part

Gr 8 Up-A Hollywood star fights to determine their own future in this romance centering gender identity. Frey, who everyone knows as Lily, is thrilled to provide fans with queer representation as the fierce female warrior Morgantha on the sci-fi show Galaxy Spark. But Frey feels more like themselves when they escape Morgantha's wigs and makeup by playing a male huntsman in a fantasy video game, and begins to wonder what that means about their gender identity. When the writers of Galaxy Spark use problematic tropes and stereotypes in the show's upcoming season, Frey must decide whether to keep quiet to protect their career or to push back against the writers and the assumptions people have made about them. Ellor's novel offers an exploration of nonbinary identity through a raw first-person narrative, capturing Frey's fears that people will question their gender identity and realistically portraying their struggle to accept themselves as trans. A tense relationship between Frey and their perfectionist costar Greta is undermined by Frey's lack of perspective, and while Frey eventually becomes more aware of their privilege as the white child of a Hollywood producer, readers may struggle to connect with a character who comes off as oblivious to the experiences of others. VERDICT Despite much-needed nonbinary and asexual representation, clumsy, distracting metaphors and a predictable plot twist make this a secondary purchase.-Emily Yates(c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc.

Hope Springs

"Readers will be enchanted with this tale of family, friendship, and community."—***School Library Connection, starred review***

"A promising debut reminiscent of Kate DiCamillo's *Because of Winn-Dixie* and Deborah Wiles's Aurora County trilogy."—***School Library Journal***

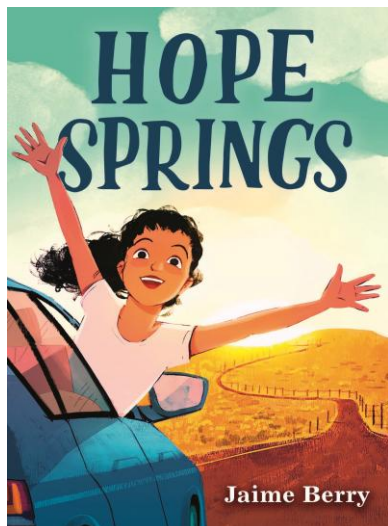
"Quilting offers a perfect metaphor in this thoughtful tale of a tween piecing together a new life."—***Kirkus Reviews***

Bend

"Read *Bend* carefully, for it provides a formula for what a queer kid needs to build resilience and adapt to new experiences and environments." – Lambda Literary

Winner: 2018 Goldie Awards - Debut novel

- **Finalist:** 2018 GCLS Awards - Debut Novel and General Fiction
 - **Finalist:** 2017 INDIES - LGBT (Adult Fiction)
 - **Finalist:** 2017 INDIES - Young Adult Fiction
-



HOPE SPRINGS

By Jaime Berry

Little, Brown and Company - 2021

Belcastro Agency: Kaitlyn Katsoupis

Rights Available:

- Film/TV
- Dramatic
- Merchandising
- Syndication

11-year-old Jubilee Johnson is an expert at three things: crafting, moving, and avoiding goodbyes. On the search for their “perfect place,” jumping from one town to the next, she and Nan live by their #1 Relocation Rule—“when it comes down to it, it’s just the two of us.” But with their Relocation Rules and a box of unread letters from her mother, Jubilee wonders if two is a little too close to alone. She takes the reigns of their next move, engineering a trip to Hope Springs, Texas—the home of her idol, reality TV superstar Arletta Paisley™ (aka, her “TV Momma”).

But when Nan is hurt, Jubilee is forced to turn to her new friends and the one person she never thought she’d call—Momma. It’s the worst solution Jubilee can think of, especially when she’s finally chancing a break from one of their rules: no best friends.

When the small town is threatened by a mega-chain superstore fronted by none other than Arletta Paisley™, Jubilee is faced with skipping town yet again or standing up to her biggest bully yet. Embracing her new home, she sets up a town rally to support all local goods and crafters, even inviting her mother—an amateur country singer on the verge of making it big—to perform at the event, hoping maybe she can finally reveal her true feelings at never quite having a true momma. Is it time to pack up and continue the hunt for perfection? Or have they finally found a place they can call home?

Author Bio:

As a teacher and staff developer, Jaime Berry has been published in a nonfiction collection entitled *Negotiating Literacy Learning: Exploring the Challenges and Achievements of Struggling Readers, K-6*. She is a native of rural Oklahoma and an active member of SCBWI. After years with two small boys in a too small apartment, Jaime and her husband moved to the wilds of suburban New Jersey and added another boy to the mix. There, they live in a purple Victorian house that, despite slowly falling apart, they all love. And where telling, reading, and writing stories still takes up most of her day.





BEFORE WE WERE BLUE

By Elizabeth Schwartz; writing as E.J. Schwartz

Flux Publishing – September 2021

Belcastro Agency : Kaitlyn Katsoupis

Rights Available:

- Translation
- Film/TV
- Dramatic
- Gaming
- Merchandising

When you're Gray, you're not to be trusted—calorie intake, open doors, food “sweeps.” You dream of Blue, of private time and the mere steps remaining to the world outside.

For Shoshana Winnick and Rowan Parish, Blue is as far away as home. Shoshana, a cheer-lebrity on the reality show Cheer Champions, doesn't want to be thin. She just wants to maintain her tumbling prowess, until an on-camera meltdown and lack of food gets her shipped off to Recovery and Relief (RR), an eating disorder rehab center.

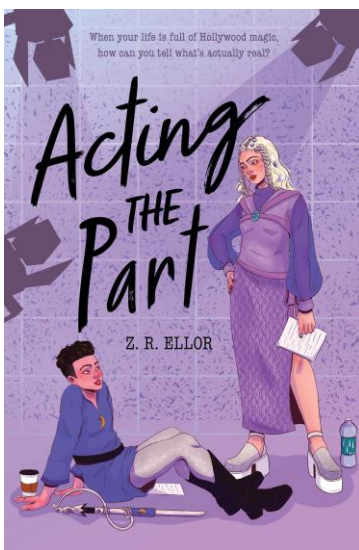
Rowan, on the other hand, has been avoiding food her entire life thanks to her mom's “chew and spit” guidance. But she keeps quiet about her life before RR—anything to keep new girl Shoshana bonded to her in every way possible. The closer they grow, the closer they come to being sent home, returning to the pressures of their separate lives. And the harder it becomes to break the self-destructive patterns that sent them to RR in the first place. Ultimately, the girls will have to make a choice: be healthy on their own, or stay sick together.

Heartfelt, inspiring, and deeply human, BEFORE WE WERE BLUE is a book readers will race to finish, with two clever yet flawed girls who completely steal your heart.

[AUTHOR BIO]

E.J. Schwartz grew up in Scotch Plains, New Jersey and currently resides in North Carolina where she studies and teaches creative writing at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. She has published a nonfiction title *Those Poor Dolls* (Semicolon, 2019), been published in *Threadcount*, and recently received honorable mention for best Microfiction 2020.





Acting the Part

By Zábé Ellor; writing as ZR Ellor

Harper Teen – December 2022

Rights Available:

- Translation
- Merchandising
- Multimedia/Gaming
- Film/TV
- Dramatic Rights/Performance
- Graphic Novel

17-year-old actor Lily Ashton lives mostly on camera. There's not much room to be your own person when everyone sees you as Morgantha Ironblade, the warrior heroine star of hit fantasy drama *Empire's End*. But her year-long goal of bringing forward a strictly LGBTQ+ romance between two lead characters is finally becoming reality. But next season's script reveals Morgantha's girlfriend will be brutally murdered, a choice that will devastate the queer fans of the show.

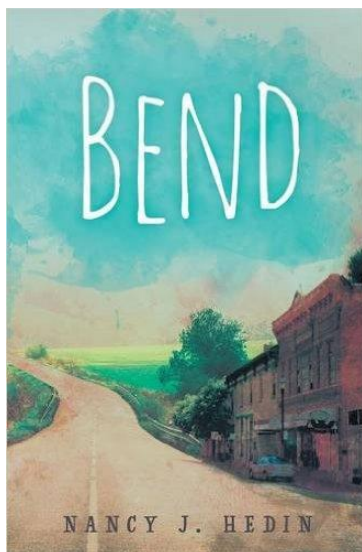
Lily teams up with Greta, who plays Morgantha's love interest; together, they concoct a fake, real-life relationship in hopes of generating enough positive press to change the showrunners' minds, saving their fictional ship and Greta's job. Though the two have never quite gotten along—since quiet, introverted Greta thinks Lily's on-set shenanigans are unprofessional, and Greta's natural acting talent makes Lily feel like an imposter at work—putting up with each other means nothing if it saves their ship. Yet, with the ship dominating everything, it also means Lily's revelation that they're nonbinary might be forced to take a backseat.

When the showrunners resist their insistence that the bury-your-gays storyline be cut, Lily pushes back further—endangering not just Greta's job, but their own. Now, Lily must choose how much they're willing to risk—their future as an actor, their growing feelings for Greta, or even their chance to live their own life—to keep playing the part everyone expects them to play.

[AUTHOR BIO]

Zabé Ellor is a literary agent with The Jennifer De Chiara Literary Agency, and all-around creative nerd from Washington D.C. His Indie Bestseller debut title *May the Best Man Win* was released with Roaring Brook Press/Macmillan in Spring 2021, and his debut Adult Fantasy *Silk Fire* publishes with Rebellion in 2022. An avid reader and writer, his non-literary interests include running, travel, and finding the perfect dim sum.





Bend

By Nancy Hedin

Riptide Publishing – May 2017

Belcastro Agency: Ella Marie Shupe/Sharon Belcastro

Rights Available:

- Translation in conjunction with publisher
- Tv/Film

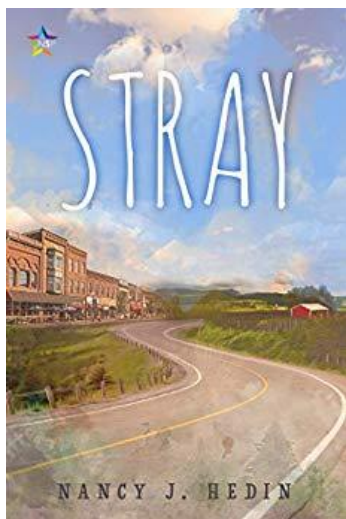
Lorraine Tyler is the only queer person in Bend, Minnesota. Or at least that's what it feels like when the local church preaches so sternly against homosexuality. Which is why she's fighting so hard to win the McGerber scholarship — her ticket out of Bend — even though her biggest competition is her twin sister, Becky. And even though she's got no real hope—not with the scholarship's morality clause and that one time she kissed the preacher's daughter.

Everything changes when a new girl comes to town. Charity is mysterious, passionate, and — to Lorraine's delighted surprise — queer too. Now Lorraine may have a chance at freedom and real love.

But then Becky disappears, and Lorraine uncovers an old, painful secret that could tear the family apart. They need each other more than ever now, and somehow it's Lorraine — the sinner, the black sheep — who holds the power to bring them together. But only if she herself can learn to bend.

I was born and raised in a small town in Central Minnesota. College and graduate school pulled me to small cities in Minnesota. That small town, small city sensibility informs my writing more than anything else. My characters appreciate the country, maintain community ties, and find solace in the quiet majesty of nature. At the same time, small settings don't make my characters any less complex than the characters created in big cities and towns. Where there are people trying to find their way in love, in their own family, and in the larger world, there is complexity. There is pain and joy. I hope that my stories resonant as true to life whether the character is gay or straight. I hope that a sense of a spiritual life comes through





Stray

By Nancy Hedin

NineStar Press – May 2019

Belcastro Agency: Ella Marie Shupe/Sharon Belcastro

Rights Available:

- Translation
- Tv/Film

Lorraine Tyler should be in vet school, but she stayed behind in her hometown of Bend, Minnesota to care for her nephew, spend time with her lover, Charity, and give her momma a chance to complete nursing school.

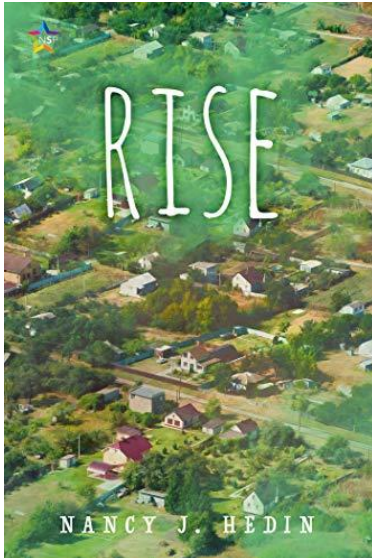
Lorraine is content until her momma brings home a steady stream of bachelors to straighten her out. Charity is out of town more and more, and Lorraine's brother-in-law is looking for a new mom for Little Man. To make matters worse there're new people in town. A politician is drumming up fear and hate, a social worker is flirting with Lorraine, and Lorraine's new friend, Ricky, is beaten into a coma.

Lorraine suspects Ricky was beaten because of being gay. Lorraine is determined to find out who did it, protect Ricky from the hater who might try to finish the job, and she's worried she might be next on the hater's list.

Stray is a story of politics fueling hate, competing romantic interests, and regular people examining their hearts, souls, and hormones. Will the people of Bend harbor the fear-rattled haters of some, or will they provide sanctuary for all?

I was born and raised in a small town in Central Minnesota. College and graduate school pulled me to small cities in Minnesota. That small town, small city sensibility informs my writing more than anything else. My characters appreciate the country, maintain community ties, and find solace in the quiet majesty of nature. At the same time, small settings don't make my characters any less complex than the characters created in big cities and towns. Where there are people trying to find their way in love, in their own family, and in the larger world, there is complexity. There is pain and joy. I hope that my stories resonant as true to life whether the character is gay or straight. I hope that a sense of a spiritual life comes through





Rise

By Nancy Hedin

NineStar Press – May 2021

Belcastro Agency: Ella Marie Shupe/Sharon Belcastro

Rights Available:

- Translation
- Tv/Film

Lorraine Tyler is finally at veterinarian school with her best friend and roommate, Frankie. She's also got a girlfriend who likes to play naked hide-and-seek.

Life in Bend is pretty great for Lorraine until she hears the voice of her dead sister Becky in her head, pointing out Lorraine's failures past and present.

Her problems don't end there. Her dad is hospitalized, leaving her heartsick at the thought of losing him, and there has been no justice for the hate crime perpetrated against Lorraine's friend Ricky the year before. As if those things weren't worry enough Lorraine's former and present girlfriends are in town seeking her undivided attention. No wonder Lorraine's wacky therapist has her eating bean soup and counting up the traumas of her life.

Lorraine and Frankie juggle their own personal crises while they try to navigate family relations and work for a more just and LGBTQ friendly community for everyone who calls Bend home.

I was born and raised in a small town in Central Minnesota. College and graduate school pulled me to small cities in Minnesota. That small town, small city sensibility informs my writing more than anything else. My characters appreciate the country, maintain community ties, and find solace in the quiet majesty of nature. At the same time, small settings don't make my characters any less complex than the characters created in big cities and towns. Where there are people trying to find their way in love, in their own family, and in the larger world, there is complexity. There is pain and joy. I hope that my stories resonant as true to life whether the character is gay or straight. I hope that a sense of a spiritual life comes through.

